TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL: FOUR PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN DESTINY AND FULFILLMENT IN RECENT AMERICAN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

by

Raymond Eugene Gibson

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, under the Joint Committee on Graduate Instruction, Columbia University

1962

ABSTRACT

Title: "Temporal and Eternal: Four Perspectives on Human Destiny and Fulfillment in Recent American Religious Thought"

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The dissertation contains an analysis of four thinkers of significance to recent American thought, with central interest given their understanding of human destiny and fulfillment, of time and eternity. That they were selected as representatives of varied philosophical and theological traditions is suggested by the titles of the four central chapters of the dissertation, which are:

1) The Idealism of William Ernest Hocking
2) The Personalism of Edgar Sheffield Brightman
3) The Theistic Naturalism of Henry Nelson Wieman
4) The Neo-Reformation Thought of Reinhold Niebuhr

Hocking is portrayed as a modern representative of absolute idealism, whose thought has been tempered by pragmatism, empiricism and critical mysticism. The analysis of Hocking's thought gives special attention to his concept of "immortability."

Brightman's subjective idealism, or personalism, is treated as a further move in the direction of empiricism. The person is the central, or, to use his words, "the category of categories." The implications of his concepts of person and values are analyzed as they contribute to his doctrine of a "finite God" and his position on "provisional immortality."

Wieman joined the philosophical forces challenging idealism, placed stress on a rigorous empirical method, was critical of traditional orthodoxy or any form of supernaturalism. He placed great stress on the social understanding of religion and the organic nature of reality. He sought a reconstruction of religious concepts which took into account the results of contemporary science. In the analysis of Wieman's thought the question of his empirical method, the way he treats the question, "Is God Personal?," his theory of values and the "eternal temporalism" of his process theology form the central concerns.

Reinhold Niebuhr was selected as a dominant force in the rise of neo-reformation thought in America. In the analysis of Niebuhr's thought, emphasis is placed on his use of Biblical symbols (Creation, Fall, Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection, Last Judgment) used to interpret the drama of history and the saving action of God in Christ. His portrayal of human nature and destiny points to history and "beyond" history.

In analysis of these four thinkers, the intellectual heritage of each is noted; his philosophical or theological method is described. Destiny and fulfillment imply the question of survival of death. The problem of time and eternity is of crucial and critical interest and given extensive treatment. What does the thinker have to say about time, history, eternity, immortality? If he affirms the survival of death, what is the relation of present life to the future? In what "realm" and by what means is man's ultimate fulfillment achieved? Where the religious thinker affirms "faith" in survival pointing beyond the farthest limits of present experience, what are the implications for the problem of

knowledge? How does he understand the relation between experience, speculation, revelation and faith? What is the relation of God to man's life and destiny? These and kindred questions are raised in the analysis of the perspective of the four religious thinkers.

In addition to the four chapters just described, the dissertation contains a preface on the philosophical and theological problems inherent in a discussion of the temporal and eternal. There follows an introductory chapter on the historical setting of recent American religious thought with a brief characterization of the eternalist or temporalist temper of thought in liberalism, modernism, neo-reformation thought, existentialism and process theology.

The concluding chapter contains a summary and critique of the four representative thinkers. The critique indicates the author's theological commitments to be in the lineage suggested by the names Augustine, Luther, Kierkegaard, Barth.

The bibliography contains special sections on the four thinkers and a general selection on the dissertation subject.

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A PREFACE ON THE PROBLEMS INHERENT IN A DISCUSSION OF THE TEMPORAL AND THE ETERNAL AS THEY BEAR ON HUMAN DESTINY AND FULFILLMENT

THE TEMPORAL

The immediate experience of temporal succession is given to all alike, whether or not they speculate about the problem of time for metaphysical inquiry. With this awareness of passing time come a number of naive assurances about the qualities of the time experienced. There is a past, a kind of "wastepaper basket"[1] which holds past events and days (or hours) that will never return. The past does not "change," and yet it grows. There is now more content in the past than there was a decade ago. There is a future that is not yet "real" which will go, by way of the present, into the wastepaper-basket past. The present is that moving dot on the time line, if a space metaphor is used, which is hardly "present" long enough to be itself "real." Poets of all ages have lamented the passing away of cherished things to which Time has dealt its inevitable death blow. Whether the poet believes that his lines will immortalize that which he has loved, or whether the apostle believes the Savior will return and destroy all his enemies -- the last being death (or time) -- the common assumption is obviously that transience is the great human problem.

Language is not always a dependable tool in the analysis of time, for it reflects and presupposes most of our given assumptions. The tense forms assume the notion of time and would be meaningless in a

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[1] Cleugh, M. F., Time (London: Methuen, 1937), p. 1. Bergson's figure of time being rolled up like a ball of yarn is a better image, as it suggests the way the past gives substance or content to the present.

timeless world. To say that time "passes," has "elapsed," "will not return," or to affirm that the "future is not yet"; to use such words as "before," "after," "until," "never," and the like, far from enlightening or instructing us about our experience of time, are themselves referred by way of our consciousness to our "sense of time" to see if they reflect it accurately. The hypostatization of time, the treating of Past, Present, and Future[2] as "things in themselves" may be possible in abstract analysis, yet immediacy of time experienced in the present is the locus from which past and future are viewed. A warning needs to be issued when events are said to be "in" time in the sense that a tree is in a field or an object "in" a space and a hypostatized entity called Time becomes the great supermarket in which events are contained and arranged in order.

The common assumptions about time are nowhere more misleading than in the variable use made of the word "real" in relation to past, present, and future. When the future is said not to be real, what is usually meant is simply that it is not (yet) present, or that is constitutes a realm of freedom which has not been given the "fixed" form of the past. The past is said to be "real" when it is meant that it has somehow achieved the status of "containing" real events which <u>have</u> happened, and yet it is "unreal" in that it can never again be a "present" reality. The present is variously seen as the "most real" because it is the only aspect of time immediately available to consciousness or action, and

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[2] Capitals will be used to indicate abstractions when these entities are considered apart from events.

yet least real because it is a tenuous, dimensionless (Zeno's paradoxes) and moving something refusing to "stay put." The work of metaphysics includes the task of clarifying the meaning and use of the word "real" just as it must consider the ontological status of time as past, present or future.

The relation of events to time contains special problems. The past event was present and future. The present event has been future and will be past. Future events will be present and past. Each event belongs, in turn, to all these places, realms or dimensions even though it "occurs" only in the present and is reflected upon as past or future from a conscious present.[3] Is it possible to infer from the obvious difference in our cognitive relation to past and future that they have different ontological status? What, finally, is to be made of the irreversibility of time? Is it accident or inherent in the nature of time? Is it possible that consciousness attributes to time the quality of succession which might conceivably be transcended on a higher level of awareness?[4]

To this point the questions have concerned the difficulties inherent in time itself. The introduction of the "human problem" suggests those perennial questions of causality, free will, and determinism, at

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[3] Broad makes the observation that we must distinguish between changes of time and changes in time.

[4] What can be made of time's forward orientation in the view of eternity which speaks of the totum simul? Does the total simultaneously-given time in Augustine's view of God's transcendence destroy or deny an element that is crucial to the nature of time?

the center of which will be found in some form, the problem of time. Does the past "determine" the future? How "free" are men in shaping the future? What are the limits or boundaries in either dimension: Was the past infinitely "extended" or was there a creation; does the future open onto a non-temporal reality more "real" than time? What is the relation of human values to time? Are they "in" time? The questions are as endless as they are complex, and even their formulation contains hidden or veiled assumptions about the things questioned.

The question of time can be foreclosed at the beginning -- similarly, we will see that the question of eternity can be closed from the opposite perspective -- by asserting that, since time is full of contradictions and the Real cannot be self-contradictory, time must be appearance only and not real.[5] Though this may be a valid argument in an idealist's perspective on Reality, where Reality and not time is the chief concern, it evades rather than answers the metaphysical question of time. "Calling a thing an illusion doesn't free us from the responsibility of accounting for how an eternal, static system could produce the illusion or appearance."[6] Then, as has been said, the word "real" is ambiguous. The variety of concepts of the real and the relative ontological status they possess will imply corresponding varieties of meaning in the concept of time. It is useless, or at least confusing, to

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[5] Parmenides, Plato, Spinoza, Hegel, Bradley and McTaggart have variations of this position, though McTaggart realized that to maintain that time was an appearance rather than a reality, did not free one from the task of explaining the appearance of time.

[6] Boodin, Time and Reality, 1904, No. 26 of Psychological Review Monograph Series, p. 65

begin by saying that time is "provisionally real," "unreal" or "ultimately real," or that one aspect of time is real as in the statement "only the present is real." What is needed is a wider analysis of perspectives and outlook in which both the meaning of "the Real" and "time" can emerge. Laird's analysis of the relation of tenses in language to the assumptions about existence and reality is instructive.

> "It is true that the past does not exist now, just as it is true that the present did not exist formerly. Existence itself means the whole of existence, not merely present existence, and past events like present ones have their determinate place in the determinate series of existence."[7]

What must always be guarded against is the too-simple transition from "the past does not exist now" through "the past is not" to "the past is not real."

A kindred problem exists in relating the discrete "nows" which in sum constitute time to time considered as "flow" or continuum. This problem is as old as Zeno and as modern as contemporary science which has, in Burtt's words, "almost entirely lost touch with duration as immediately experienced."[8] Closely related to the problem of change is the relation of abstract conceptions of "objective time" to the subjective awareness of time. Why is time "fast" to one and "slow" to another or different for the same person at different times? The time that is "crowded" with events "goes" or "passes" more swiftly in man's awareness of it than empty time in which he waits for something

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[7] Laird, John, A Study in Realism (New York: Macmillan, 1927)

[8] Burtt, E. A., Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science, Anchor Books (New York: Doubleday, 1954), p. 262

to occur. If it is said that there is an objective time that is uniform in its passing and that this can be determined by the motions of the heavens, do the motion measured and the measured motion involve a circularity? If time is a name for the relations of events, is there one time or are there many times?

THE ETERNAL

One seemingly simple way to approach the concept of eternity is to assume that it is the opposite of time. Common usage has persistently suggested that this is the case, that these two could be paired as hot and cold (which would imply a matter of degree), or of black and white (which would imply a difference in quality). However, the solution to the problem of eternity would not be simple if this were possible, for not only is it not clear what the time is to which eternity is the opposite, but to define a thing by pairing it with what it is not does not indicate what it <u>is</u>. However, whether it is simple, complex, or impossible, it will become obvious that eternity is seldom analyzed or defined apart from some consideration of time. "Does time have a beginning or an end?" is a question asked when time is considered in a linear spatial metaphor. Does it "front on" some non-temporal dimension which is "before" or which comes "after"? Can this "before" and "after" be expressed in such a way as to evade their time reference? Is eternity a non-temporal or "timeless" order? Is it co-terminus with time, yet without duration? Does eternity "transcend" time in such a way that it "includes" or "cancels" time? Does the

concept of eternity originate, as Locke suggested, from the conceptual extension to infinity of the present experience of time? Or on the other hand, as Plato suggests in the Timaeus, is time a derivative concept, a "moving image" of eternity?

The most recurrent uses of eternity, both in common language and in philosophical usage, suggest three meanings: unending time or infinite duration, the unchanging or timeless, a transcendent perfection which is beyond time and change. The first sense is more properly the "everlasting," the second, the "timeless." The third use is the most difficult and most crucial for an understanding of religious thought in East or West. When Meister Eckhart, in the Middle Ages, says that

> "In eternity is no before and after: the happenings of the past millennium and the future one and now, in eternity are all the same. God's doings of a thousand years ago and now and a thousand years to come are but one single act."[9]

or when Augustine says that God's years stand together as a day or as present;[10] when Von Hügel says that eternal life precludes not only spatialized clock time but duration as well;[11] or when Plotinus or the Vedas speak of the One in which all is unmoved and unmoving, we are dealing with a different order from time, even though temporal metaphors may be used negatively to describe it. It would be helpful indeed if the three uses of eternity had always been clearly distinguished, and it would simplify the present work if the third meaning were the only one with which it was necessary to deal. A moment's

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[9] Eckhart's Works, Vol. I, p. 150 (translated by Evans)

[10] Augustine, Confessions, 1.61 (Pusey translation)

[11] Von Hugel, Eternal Life (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clarke, 1912), p. 383

reflection indicates that, helpful or not, simple or complex, it is impossible so to reserve the word. Eternity has been used in all three senses and views of man's fulfillment and destiny in various religions have had connotations which suggest each of them.

The idea of the immortality of the soul, of its infinite duration or its indestructibility, is one of the oldest and most pervasive of religious concepts. The Egyptians built the massive, time-defying pyramids to house the remains of their departed Pharaohs. In the corridors are countless inscriptions containing hopes and assurances of everlastingness. Christian as well as pagan literature is filled with instances in which time is the obvious, and sometimes crucial vehicle to state either the nature or the quality of life beyond death. In The Divine Comedy, Dante uses time in a near-mechanical way to express the process and progress in the purgation of guilt and the schooling in virtue that is necessary before the soul can approach the presence of God. In Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, the journey and the road are symbolic of achievement and of time. The views could be multiplied in which the concept of eternity is described through temporal metaphors.

The idea of timelessness also recurs in descriptions of destiny and fulfillment. One theme in Greek religion viewed escape from flux as a way to salvation. Kierkegaard speaks of the Greek esthetic ideal represented in their sculpture as "the eternal expression expressed eternally."[12] The roots of the "timeless" quality in Greek theory came,

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[12] Kierkegaard, S., Concept of Dread (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), p. 79. Just so, Shakespeare expects to give immortality to his beloved by the "timeless" beauty of his poetry.

in part, from Pythagorean number theories. Yet it is not unknown in Christian concepts. The Apocalypse of John describes the culmination of its eschatological vision and says there shall be no more night there. Dostoyevsky, writing of the ecstatic and timeless vision or illumination experienced in the epileptic seizure, comments, "Then I understand what the Apocalypse means when it says that there shall be no more time." This view continues to be central to some oriental religions which, if we use Hocking's critique, not only deny time but are "world-negating" as well.

It is difficult to separate the "timeless" eternity from those views which, while timeless, hold the fulfillment of temporally-achieved "graces" in a simultaneous present. Plotinus, Augustine, Boethius, and Dante contain suggestions of both. There is a way of interpreting Bergson's philosophy which "eternalizes" flux and change. Duration is the fundamental or "eternal" reality. The forms which the mind isolates and "fixes" in concepts are only "snapshots" of a constantly moving and changing reality. The importance of Bergson's work may be its correction of a traditional use of time as opposite of eternity in which temporal existence is deprecated because it is not absolute or eternal, and in which Being and Becoming are seen to be engaged in a life-and-death struggle. It is necessary constantly to guard against two rather superficial fallacies which contrast time and eternity: one sees in time only becoming and glorifies it by some evolutionary theory; the other sees time as imperfect and denies its reality altogether.

The problem of eternity has traditionally been weighted with the

question of values. If we call the roll of values traditionally held to be the "highest" values, we have truth, beauty and goodness, thus including aesthetic and moral values. In what sense can these be called ultimate or eternal? Are they reducible to the proposition, "This is what I like, enjoy or prefer"? Do they exist, as another view would have it, in the nature of things? What can be made of the demonstrable fact that there are many diverse moralities which appear to be conditioned by environment and pragmatic considerations? Can an absolute standard which is not temporal in the sense that it will always be valid ever be assumed? Do values change with time? Are there ideal values which are eternal, on which the changing values are patterned, and of which they are only approximations? The possible extremes here have been put picturesquely by Cleugh.

> "The Elizabethan, mourning extravagantly for his dead lady, swore that in her death Nature had lost the 'one perfect mold,' which could never again be attained--a queer perversion of Plato, whose whole point was that Ideas were distinct from particular copies of them, and were immune from the change and death that ends temporal existence."[13]

The discussion of the relation between the eternal beauty and the beautiful object opens the question of the universal and the particular. Can beauty be said to be eternal when it is painfully apparent that particular objects of beauty do not abide forever? "To say of values that they are eternal is not to say that they endure throughout unending time, but that they transcend time in the narrower sense of flux."[14]

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[13] Cleugh, op. cit., p. 289

[14] Ibid., p. 290. Bosanquet writes, "If anyone asserts that he knows the universe to be ultimately in change and in time, he must face the question of the kind and degree of its unity, or conservation of values." (Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy, p. 217)

It is true that the transience of time makes it appear inimical to values. Whether we can agree with McTaggart that time is the last enemy to be overcome or say with Plato that time has no power over beauty itself, some disposition must be made of the fate of the particular. Beauty may be able to transcend flux, but the beautiful object does not thereby escape time. The image of the pure and spiritual goodness of the saint may be ageless, but the particular saint ages and dies!

Death is the point at which the "human" question concerning time and eternity is raised most acutely. Man's life is caught up in the flux of time and change. He ages and dies. He transcends time to the extent that he can remember and chronicle the flux as well as anticipate his eventual death. Does his transcendence imply or demonstrate that he belongs to another "realm" or "reality" which escapes the death blow dealt by time? Does man survive death? If so, what is the character of that survival? What can be made of the curious recurrence in many forms, at different times and in varying cultures, of the experience which a poet has called the "intimation of immortality?" Or is the eternity to which man "belongs" a quality of life which he experiences in the present rather than an extension of life beyond death? Reinhold Niebuhr comments repeatedly on man's transcendence of time: that man is a creature of time and yet stands above time to survey the past and the future. His transcendence prompts man to believe that he has a destiny beyond time; that the final meaning of his life is not completed in the temporal. Men in all ages and cultures

have raised these and kindred questions. The perennial problems to which men return have to do with meaning and value, destiny and fulfillment. The problem of fulfillment and destiny in recent American religious thought is the subject of the work that follows. In it we will examine the way human destiny has been conceived in temporalist and eternalist terms. The question of time and eternity will be a matter of central interest and concern, as will the question of human survival of death. We will raise again the age-old question of Job, "If a man die, will he live again?" However, before proceeding, we must set the framework in which the study will take shape.

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL SETTING

In Wieman's American Philosophies of Religion (1934), he speaks of "four major streams of religious thought which appear to be current in America today"[1] by which he means: supernaturalism, idealism, religious realism and naturalism. E. A. Burtt, in his Types of Religious Philosophy (1939), follows a basically similar set of categories in his examination of current religious thought. Writing less than two decades later, Herbert Schneider, in his Religion in Twentieth-Century America,[2] provides a more complete outline of movements of thought set out in a chronological sequence which includes: the liberal optimism of the beginning of the century; the characteristic mood of modernism which developed in the first three decades of the century; the importation and development of "crisis" or neo-orthodox theology in the 30's and 40's; the emergence of process theology stemming from Whitehead's philosophy; the postwar World War II existentialism; and, finally, a religion of humanism and secularism which, though generally unorganized and lacking focus or definitive spokesmen, is nevertheless increasingly widespread. It is instructive to note that although these outlines are separated by only a few years they suggest how much has happened in the development and ferment of religious thought in recent decades.

Wieman's single category of "supernaturalism" did not, for instance, indicate the difference between "neo-Reformation thought" and traditional

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[1] Wieman, H. N., American Philosophies of Religion with Bernard E. Meland. (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1936), p. 311

[2] Schneider, H. W., Religion in Twentieth-Century America. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952)

orthodoxy, nor, indeed, could it have done so in 1934. Much of the writing designated as "neo-orthodox" and nearly all the works on existentialism appeared upon the American theological scene after 1940. It would have been difficult at that time for Wieman to have seen that traditional idealism would wane, or that subjective idealism, or personalism, would for a time grow stronger. The categories of realism and naturalism he uses are too indefinite to indicate the significant variety of thought that would have to be subsumed under these general terms.

These observations should warn us that enough theological ferment is taking place in the middle decades of the present century that any account of it will soon be outdated. The intention of the present introduction is not to attempt to up-date the work of Schneider or others who have chronicled the religious and intellectual developments in recent decades, but to provide a general setting for the analysis of the specific problem of human destiny and fulfillment in contemporary American religious thought. The intention here is to capture the various moods of the movements, more particularly as they bear upon the problem of human destiny.

Liberalism

The optimistic liberalism which characterized the last quarter of the 19th and the first quarter of the 20th century was concerned basically with the reconstruction of society. The same spirit and vigor that produced the missionary movement and liberal theology in 19th century Protestantism moved in the 20th toward the reconstruction of society in accord

with the ideal of the kingdom of God. In contrast to Pilgrim's Progress which cast its wistful gaze toward another world, liberalism fashioned a social gospel which was profoundly concerned with this world; with social tasks to be performed, with political, economic and cultural achievements to be sought for their own sake. If previous periods had been characterized by the emphasis they placed on another world, with the present world viewed as a place of preparation, then in contrast, early 20th century liberalism accentuated the glories of humanity and human achievements without reference to the supernatural destiny of man. In its confidence that man is good, liberalism developed the active side of a Calvinist work doctrine and the natural religion of the enlightenment. Science, commerce and vocations in the secular world, if they were entered into as a way of glorifying God and if they stimulated stewardship and philanthropy, provided a new and activistic means by which the kingdom of God was conceived, and indeed brought into being, not in another world, but as integral to the present one.

Schneider's comment is apt that the doctrines of the day were only "verbally Christian." In effect, the popular philosophy of the time was translated into Christian language by applying the so-called "natural law" to the spiritual world. Christian doctrine was re-shaped as symbols to express such truths as the "struggle for existence," "progress through struggle," "truth through trial and error" and the other commonplaces of evolutionary ethics. A distinctly American ethos informed the dream of the social gospel of creating the kingdom of God on earth. Its moral idealism sought practical fruits of religion, expressed concerns over the

evils of society, affirmed the sacredness of human personality, declared its optimism about human virtue. When it was theological at all it was a theology of immanence of God coupled with a belief in evolutionary progress in history. Approaching the problems of the social scene, liberalism used the Bible in an instrumental rather than an authoritative way, selected the social justice it found in Amos and Micah, sought to apply the ethical teachings of Jesus on wealth, family and state. It detected a note of non-resistance which it could affirm in a sentimental way but not follow, and placed great emphasis on problems of the political and industrial order. Liberalism lived by the faith that the kingdom of God was a real possibility for this world, though its basic optimism did not blind its spokesmen to existing evils. They were viewed as social more than personal, thus conscience needed to be "social conscience." The social nature of personal existence was acknowledged; society was an organism, not a collection of individual units. Just as Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin had galvanized the public interest and opinion in the plight of the slaves, so Sheldon's work In His Steps: What Jesus Would Do did more than any single writing to make people aware of the claims of the social gospel on the personal conscience. The formulation of a Christian social ethic under the banner of the liberal theology was attempted by Rauschenbusch who was convinced that the kingdom of God would come out of the existing institutions of society. Rauschenbusch's assumption that patterns of social order were not immutable and fixed and could be fundamentally reorganized, principally by the techniques of socialism, was akin to a growing conviction that the quality

of the spiritual life was essentially inseparable from the quality of social life. The society with its existing evils lay close by and awaited only the concerted effort of those who would now devote themselves to the creation of God's kingdom in their midst. With their effort, and an assist from a benevolent and willing Providence, success was assured. This was to be "the Christian Century." One did not need to look beyond time or history for fulfillment when so much could be achieved in tasks readily at hand.

Modernism - -

The modernism of the first decades in America had roots in New England transcendentalism and absolute idealism and grew in force, if not significantly in numbers, by feeding on a growing evolutionist enthusiasm. Linking its aspirations with the emerging science of the day, modernism attempted to rise above the rigid confines of traditional doctrines, creeds and cults with a vision of a universal faith founded on universal evolution. The impetus to freedom from tradition brought a sharp rebuke from Pope Pius X in his Encyclical Pascendi gregis (1907); and while this effectively checked the spread of the movement in Roman Catholic writing and preaching, it continued strong in Protestant, Reformed Jewish, and secular circles.

Like liberalism--and it is difficult to delineate where the one begins and the other ends--modernism generally concerned itself with man's destiny and fulfillment in temporalist terms. Though spokesmen grouped together as modernists differ in detail, they generally held

that the immortality of the soul could not be demonstrated. The proposition of personal survival of death was generally held to be hypothetical rather than absolute. The proof of immortality by an appeal to biblical proof texts was unacceptable since higher criticism has caused modernism to view the Bible as fallible. Arguments from present existence or consciousness failed to establish a future existence, either causally or teleologically. Appeals to occult and mystical experience or to telepathy, though perenially encountered, were not found to contain substantial defensible evidence.

One position did find favor among Modernists. Personalism, or subjective idealism, attempted to demonstrate that progress toward the higher elements of personal existence embodied such values as love, sincerity, and wisdom, and that these values are more deep-seated in the universe than the powers that would destroy them. If the universe is friendly to these "realities," and indeed its own reality found to resemble them at heart, will not the universe conserve what it has been at such pains to create? Modernists found such a case more acceptable than traditional concepts of "heaven" and "hell," especially as its views were more congenial to modern empiricism and provide a more fitting base for the attempts to achieve meaningful self-fulfillment in the present.

Modernists such as Harry Emerson Fosdick and Shailer Mathews, influenced by idealism, made strong arguments for immortality. However, modernism tended generally to emphasize the values that lie at hand. The attainment of these values constitutes religious progress, itself

demanding enough to claim full allegiance here and now. Its greatest faith was that progress is possible and even inevitable, and in either case worth working for. Its faith can be traced to those "evolutionary" faiths of earlier centuries of which Carl Becker has remarked that the eighteenth century believed that by taking thought, man might add a cubit to his stature, and the nineteenth century believed that a cubit would be added whether he took thought or not.[3]

In the view of modernism the special claims of Jesus, the appeal to miracle, or to a God who intervenes in the orderly processes of the world, were rejected and became a source of conflict with traditional Christianity. Prayer was seen as a way to open the inner life to larger horizons of development, but it must eschew the traditional petitionary form that turns a sovereign God into an errand boy. In the end, modernism was most concerned with wisdom and conduct that have present meaning and value. Thus, by and large, it concerned itself with the problems of men and movements, institutions and social programs: in a word, with present tasks. A future life, if there be one, was seen as a continuing enterprise in which these concerns go on. By and large, modernism viewed its world as a temporal one in which values (hopefully eternal) are at work or in process of becoming realized. The mood as well as the result of modernism has been summarized in Randall's comment,

> "All in all, the outstanding religious phenomenon of the century has been, not so much the fading of faith, as its transfer from a theological and cosmic to a human and social object."[4]

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[3] Becker, Carl, article on "Progress," in Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, Vol. XII, p. 495

[4] Randall, J. H., The Making of the Modern Mind. (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1940, rev. edition), p. 539

Neo-Reformation Thought

Neo-Reformation thought began as a reaction against the dominant emphases of liberalism and modernism. The birth of the movement, if one can be assigned, is usually attributed to the publication in 1918 of Barth's Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Reversing the tendency of modernism and liberalism to make of religious faith the quest by which man discovered God or centered his attention on his own religious experience, Barth centered his attention on God's word to men. He emphasized God's faithfulness and man's rebellion and faithlessness.

> "We have found in the Bible a new world, God, God's sovereignty, God's glory, God's incomprehensible love. Not the history of man but the history of God! Not the virtues of men but the virtues of him who hath called us out of the darkness into his marvelous light! Not human standpoints but the standpoint of God!"[5]

In America, Reinhold Niebuhr's Moral Man and Immoral Society (1936)[6] stressed the Reformation doctrine of Justification by Faith and proceeded to an analysis of sin along Augustinian and Lutheran lines. In Niebuhr's thought one finds remnants, and continuations, of liberal developments united with a re-interpretation of classical Christian doctrines. Following his lead, the new orthodoxy questioned the view of progress and, as its confidence in man was shattered by two world wars and three decades of "crisis," turned to the biblical faith not so much in search of consolation as for an understanding of man's dilemma. It found a rationale in the traditional myths of the biblical understanding

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[5] Barth, Karl, The Word of God and the Word of Man (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1928), pp. 43, 45

[6] Niebuhr, Reinhold, Moral Man and Immoral Society (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936)

of history which challenged the idea of progress. It questioned man's experience as a sufficient standard of truth and his ideals as an adequate measure of goodness. For this view the Bible is the authoritative Word of God addressed to man who is estranged from God and cannot, on his own, bridge the gulf. In the Word and in Jesus the Christ, the distance is bridged in an "event," a "revelation," an "encounter," the initiative for which comes from the side of the transcendent God. History is not regarded as a process so much as a "drama" in which the sovereign God is Creator and Redeemer. Human freedom and decision are important for the drama, though God's will alone gives ultimate meaning to history. That meaning, finally, like God, Himself, is partly revealed and partly hidden. God is both in "history" and "beyond" it, a position that avoids the nihilism of a radical transcendence and the idolatry of a purely immanent view. In such a representative of this group as Reinhold Niebuhr, history has genuine meaning; yet no purely historical meaning is final or absolute.[7] The assumption that God is Will, and that human life and history find meaning in relation to that will,

> "imparts to history a dynamic or active content, in sharp contrast to those views which regard any will or striving as finite and incompatible with the passionless infinity of God."[8]

If, then, the characteristic mood of liberalism and modernism was concern with the task or process at hand, that of neo-Reformation thought has been with a transcendent source, seen in relation to human life and history

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[7] Niebuhr, Reinhold, Nature and Destiny of Man (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), Vol. I, p. 27

[8] _____, Faith and History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. 144 f

as Creator, Judge and Redeemer. Its concerns are both "in" and "beyond" history.

Process Theology

Process theology, stemming from the philosophy of Whitehead, is, as Professor Williams has written, very much itself in process.[9] The integration of the biblical message into a comprehensive philosophical-theological outlook has been attempted by H. N. Wieman, Charles Hartshorne, Bernard M. Loomer, Barnard Meland, and Daniel Day Williams. In varying ways these men have attempted to develop a Christian theology which acknowledges, with Whitehead, that process rather than timeless being is the ultimate metaphysical truth. God's essence is seen to be love which, in reciprocal relations with His creatures, eternally completes Himself as it fulfills them. Wieman has emphasized the empirical strand in Whitehead and "approaches the knowledge of God through identifying in human experience that observable process which works beyond human control and planning, and which is the creative source of human good."[10] The philosophy of process is not offered as a substitute for Christian faith, but rather as a more adequate interpretation of the Bible's account of God's creative and redemptive action than can be given by an idealistic philosophical tradition. The latter makes God absolute and impassive and thus impersonal, or identifies Him with the total process of being and fails to give an intelligible account of evil. Process theology has

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[9] Williams, D. D., What Present-day Theologians are Thinking (New York: Harper's, rev. edition, 1959), p. 74

[10] Ibid.

been criticized by its enemies as presenting a finite or "unfinished" God.

Existentialism

If the importation of Barth's theology gave impetus to neo-Reformation thought in America, the work of the Danish Protestant, Soren Kierkegaard and, to a lesser degree, the thought of the Spanish Catholic, Miguel Unamuno, provided a similar stimulus for existentialism. Arising in Europe as a protest against the Absolute Idealism of Hegel, existentialism in America brought into question the validity of the evolutionary enthusiasm of the social gospel and the impersonality of process theology. It asked again about the meaning and destiny of the individual self. The human situation, with its isolation, frustration and guilt feelings, suggested the older theologies which had portrayed man as a lost or estranged creature.

> "Thus there grew what Unamuno called 'the tragic sense of life,' and among theologians there grew a respect for the tragic themes in the theologies of sin, damnation, election, and 'salvation from above.'"[11]

Existentialism has influenced much of contemporary American culture beyond the specifically religious or theological domain. Indeed, the dominant motif of existentialism, by being shared by contemporary literature, art and drama, has opened lines of communication between these aspects of culture which before had been broken or blocked. The dialogue between them may be one of the more hopeful signs in the contemporary scene. They have much to explore, to learn and to share

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[11] Schneider, H. W., Religion in Twentieth-Century America, p. 139

concerning the whole question of the meaning and destiny of man. It must be said in its favor that existentialism has been willing to confront the awful agony of the age and to ask for some pertinent word about the fate of the existing individual. When it has found partial answers, they have often been stated as paradoxes that see both the present pathos and a possible glory and have spoken, in Pascal's words, of the "grandeur and misery" of man.

Secular Humanism

This group is not significantly large if its constituents are limited to professing adherents who identify themselves as such. However, the mood of this group is so pervasive of large numbers having nominal attachments to existing religious bodies that its effect cannot be determined by any statistical means. They have been described as those for whom "the chief enemies of religion are the flight from reason, the defense of historical creeds, the institutionalization of faith, and the lack of fraternal respect among religions."[12] They have been more concerned with the distinction between the humane and the inhumane than between the sacred and the secular. Their religion is a religion of man, and, though they eschew the other-worldliness and transcendentals of the traditional religions they have rejected, they contribute an occasional prophet of stature and work with devotion for causes of enlightenment and brotherhood. For them, man's destiny is seen to lie in his deeds and the good is its own, and adequate, reward. Like the liberalism at the beginning of the century, they focus on the task at hand though the

[12] Ibid.

optimism of that earlier time has been sobered by the events between.

The Selection of Representative Thinkers

Any attempt to condense the variety of twentieth century American religious thinking into so brief an outline does justice to none and damage to all. The reason for including this brief resume is that it allows us to comment on the reason for the selection of the four religious thinkers whose thought is central to the work that follows, and to place them within that framework. The individuals have been chosen because they have had significant part in, or been influenced by, one or more of the positions outlined.[13] Having selected them for their distinctive place in the philosophical or religious spectrum, it is hoped that a careful analysis of their contribution to the understanding of human destiny and fulfillment will illumine the status of these concepts in a more satisfactory way than would have resulted from a more limited study of these concepts in a wider group of thinkers. We have selected William Ernest Hocking, Edgar Sheffield Brightman, Henry Nelson Wieman and Reinhold Niebuhr.

Hocking was chosen as a modern representative of absolute idealism whose thought has been tempered by pragmatism, empiricism, and critical

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[13] It should be noted in passing that the positions of philosophical positivism and religious fundamentalism have not been treated because the former does not admit the question and the latter forecloses the answer by its biblical literalism. Their positions could have been described, but an analysis of them would have had to have gone into the problem of language on the one hand and biblical authority on the other and would, in the opinion of the present writer, have taken the discussion far afield without significant results for the present topic.

mysticism. The liberalism of the last decades of the nineteenth and the early decades of the twentieth centuries was grounded in idealism and, in a variety of ways, pragmatism, realism, naturalism and existentialism brought the assumptions of this position into question. Hocking, whose thought was influenced by Hegel, Royce, and James, provides an interesting bridge between traditional idealism and emerging empiricism.

Brightman's subjective idealism, or personalism, represents a further move in the direction of empiricism. Developed on the continent by Lotze, in England by Pringle-Pattison and C. C. J. Webb, personalism developed in America within a broadly idealist framework which opposed the absolute idealism of Royce and Hocking. The chief names associated with this movement in America have been Howison, Flewelling, Bowne, Brightman and Knudson. Brightman's system centers on the nature of values in which the person is central, or, to use his words, the category of categories. He seeks to be empirical throughout rather than placing emphasis on rationalistic and a priori factors in religious knowledge. His position, or that of personalism, was congenial, as we have noted, to the spirit of modernism.

Wieman's theistic naturalism emerged as he was influenced successively by Royce, Perry, Hocking, Whitehead and Dewey. His thought is associated with "process theology" and this would suggest the extent of Whitehead's importance for Wieman's thought. However, we will see a continuing influence of Hocking's critical mysticism in Wieman's development. Wieman takes a position in the philosophical forces challenging idealism, places stress on a rigorous empirical method, is a critic of traditional orthodoxy

or any form of "supernaturalism." He places great stress on the social understanding of religion and the organic nature of reality. More than any of the thinkers we will examine, Wieman has sought a reconstruction of religious concepts which takes into account the results of contemporary science.

Reinhold Niebuhr was selected as a dominant force, if not, indeed, the crucial figure, in the rise of "neo-Reformation" or "neo-orthodox" thought in America. His "crisis theology" shows significant influence from the Danish existentialist Kierkegaard, particularly in the analysis of man's finitude, anxiety and sin. Though his intellectual and spiritual lineage can be traced from biblical propheticism, by way of Augustine, Luther, Kierkegaard and Barth, he is distinctly "American" in the liberalism from which he came and of which he became chief critic, and by the distinctively political, social and historical nature of his thought.

In the analysis of the thought of these four religious thinkers, the principal concern is to ask what they have said about human fulfillment and destiny. We will note their intellectual heritage and commitments and describe their philosophical or theological method. We will examine their value theories. Inasmuch as the treatment of destiny and fulfillment must consider the question of survival of death, we will discuss the age-old problem of time and eternity. What does the one under discussion think about time, history, eternity, immortality? If he believes that there is survival of death, what is the relation of present life to the future existence that is affirmed? In what "realm" is man's ultimate fulfillment achieved and by what means? If the subject

chosen means that we must look toward the farthest limits of life, and even beyond life as it is presently known, what are the consequent implications for the limits of knowledge? What is the relation between experience, speculation and faith? The relation of God to man's life and destiny will be explored with the acknowledgement that the present writer views this as the crucial problem. Our analysis of each of the four representative thinkers will concern the problems of knowledge, God, values, time and eternity as these bear upon the question of human destiny and fulfillment.

THE IDEALISM OF WILLIAM ERNEST HOCKING

The idealism of William Ernest Hocking, whose thought is the concern of this chapter, is a synthesis of absolute idealism, pragmatism and enlightened and critical mysticism. He attempts to establish his philosophy of religion on secure empirical grounds and in his empiricism the category of personality emerges as the deepest, richest and most comprehensive idea of human thought. His intellectual heritage is drawn from Hegelian idealism as modified by his teacher, Josiah Royce. His thought was tempered by William James, another of his teachers, and by the realistic trend in early twentieth century philosophy. His mysticism has roots in both Oriental and Western sources, and occupies an important place in Hocking's thought as he interprets the nature and attributes of man and God.

Hocking's major work in the Philosophy of Religion is his The Meaning of God in Human Experience (1912). Central to his position are several key axioms, the language of some of which suggests paradoxes. He has a principle of "ambiguous simplicity" which holds that the world or its parts are neither unambiguously complex or simple; neither atomism nor indefinite complexity has the final word. Knowing is always "knowing in experience," a principle he designates as "initial empiricism," and which means for him that experience is metaphysical. His concept of "inclusive rationality" means that nothing in experience is mere fact or datum, for reason has the last word. Ultimately, self-existence

entails self-consciousness. Yet reason recognizes that our thought is never adequate to its total object. The final "axiom" is stated as the "union of fact and value." Both fact and value are objective; they have an inseparable unity in experience; and both are coextensive; knowing and valuing have a priori elements. It is here that mysticism and religion make their contribution to philosophy.[1]

The unity of fact and value in human experience gives life the stamp of reality. Often this reality is only dimly perceived or partially attained. The chief end of life is just this perception and attainment. When we search for examples that will illustrate and illumine this quality of experience, we find them in a wide range extending from momentary instances of intuition of our common life to the monumental achievements of the "prophets." Whenever found, they are the best witness we have to the nature and destiny of man. Hocking's term for this awareness and achievement is the "prophetic consciousness." It is a crucial term for the investigation of his understanding of eternal life.

THE PROPHETIC CONSCIOUSNESS - SOURCE OF HAPPINESS HERE AND HEREAFTER

Religion contributes wealth to human life not by creating anything for men, but in creating men, in conferring on them the power and freedom to create. The question of happiness or misery hinges on the

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[1] G. Adams and W. P. Montague, editors, Contemporary American Philosophy, I: 385-400

location of values and the means of their attainment. Religions exhibit various hues according as they regard values to be attained in history or beyond it, achieved by effort or conferred by fortune. It is a matter of great import whether the view of life is a "world-denying" or "world-affirming" one, whether it leads men to "find their welfare within the stream of historic circumstance, risk, accident, or outside of it--even though just outside."[2] Hocking uses the concept of happiness as a key to value and asks what, in final terms, life can affirm which gives it scope and meaning within and "beyond" time.

Happiness is not dependent upon possession of particular objective things; no definable object is necessary to or sufficient for happiness. Yet Hocking eschews the stoic sentiment which seeks security in the self alone, for it is without assurance of any victory other than its own poise or its own value creations, a "shut-in-ness as can encounter no solidity of value in the world beyond."[3] Neither in particular objects, then, nor in absolute self-sufficiency lies the conditions for happiness. Who then is truly happy? "The happy man in any situation is the man to whom the situation is no cave, who in the midst of it can hold his broader bearings, bringing to it the quiet sense of affairs and, in the end, eternity."[4] In contrast to unhappiness which is divided attention,

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[2] Hocking, W. E., The Meaning of God in Human Experience (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1912), p. 485

[3] Ibid., p. 489

[4] Ibid., p. 490

conscious conflict, fragmentation of consciousness and action, happiness is that which gives concentration, enthusiasm, and restores wholeness. Happiness, now described as "the continuous undivided consent of my whole-idea to the experience or activity at hand,"[5] does not depend on externals, but on one's inward mode of dealing with them. What is required is entering upon the game of life with the paradoxical blend of maximum detachment and maximum attachment--an experience known to the sportsman and the experimentalist. Man's relationship to history may resemble one in which he acts as if his treasure were there, while knowing that it is not. The danger in this position, however, consists in an essential detachment and alienation between the self and the world. "The world of common action having no part in the absolute end, being there as a means only, becomes touched with a sense of incomplete reality or illusoriness."[6] Nor can this detachment from reality be healed by an altruism or vicarious happiness by, as Hocking describes it, the willingness of the self to suffer and indeed to be lost if only there is success for the larger whole--the party, the state, or history.[7] Vicarious happiness cannot deal with the problem of evil in any other than essentially passive ways, as by meeting the evil hour,

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[5] Ibid., p. 492

[6] Ibid., p. 496

[7] While rejecting this position, Hocking cites with admiration the way in which Royce has brought this principle of altruism, of finding in temporal life an expression of the eternal triumph, to its "philosophical fulfillment." Ibid., p. 498

being carried through it, as it were, by one's attachment to the absolute, by distributing the shock through the whole range of one's wider vision and longer purposes. Hocking says that this is not enough. True human manhood does not wait in "philosophic discomfort" for the ills of our destiny to surprise us; rather it goes forth to meet them.

> "No man, I venture to say, can be wholly happy in defeat unless he foreknows and goes to it, not as Napoleon to his island, but as Socrates to his death. Not resignation, but renunciation, is the greatest and last of the virtues in presence of the ultimate enemies of our fortunes. And not blank resignation, but renunciation made significant by some consciously-known purpose which in the midst of defeat is not defeated. Only thus can the will return wholeheartedly to the charge. No vicarious or indirect mediation can supply me with the necessary integrity of interest in this present undertaking. In short, no man can be happy, nor ought to be, without a conscious control of his own fortune; without a fundamental and necessary success in his own dealing with the world of objects beyond him."[8]

Hocking admits that such a view assumes what both stoicism and altruism have considered impossible, a power over facts despite our "finite circumstances." If I am to have a quality of genuine happiness, which is perfect belief in and devotion to my undertaking, nothing must cast a shadow over the validity of my present act and purposes. If, as in altruism, I act, but another is to succeed, an air of unreality is cast over my action and I become a diminished and divided being.

> "For while God and Nature first become real to me because they determine me; they can only remain real, insofar as I also can successfully determine them, and as I intend... Reality must be defined as the region wherein I can identify my happiness with my own success; not alone with the success of another."[9]

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[8] Ibid., p. 501

[9] Ibid., p. 502

At this point the highest meaning of life, the purposes at work in history, and the activity and triumph of God, merge into one. I know the Other because our object-worlds and our objective-goods are the same. Every soul knows the whole in some degree; thus it must be possible for each will, to the same degree, to "contain the will of the universe." This means that the soul must "assume the burden" of omniscience and omnipotence with regard to "some fragment, however minute, of the historical work of the universe. To be engaged in such an action would be for that moment to be completely real.

Hocking's term for this complete reality is "prophetic consciousness." It is not some foreknowledge of an event that will happen in the future through the actions of forces beyond oneself. Rather, the prophetic consciousness is the knowledge that this action of mine, at this time and place, has succeeded in establishing its foothold in history. "It is an assurance of the future and of all time as determined by my own individual will, embodied in my present action."[10] He adds, significantly and somewhat ominously, that he has no assurance that such prophetic consciousness is possible or has ever been attained; yet it is necessary for happiness and "without it this region of historical fact must stand condemned as outside the sphere of either justice or reality."[11] There are the great experiences of a Socrates

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[10] Ibid., p. 503

[11] Ibid. (underline mine)

or the like, supreme types which have analogues and anticipations scattered throughout our common experiences. Prophetic consciousness, then, if possible, will not be left without its witnesses. Skill, an experimental dealing with facts which has reached a point of assurance and command; thought which is built on the basis of concrete certainty and "steps out from a vast substratum of the undubitable"; bodily experience which exhibits command over a limited range of physical nature: all these testify to man's power over facts and his foothold in history. Man's proud "prophetic attitude" is native to his existence and can be cancelled neither by his numerous defeats nor his consciousness of deity. As it perfects itself, the form of command becomes "non-assertive, silent, and immediate, conveyed with the temper of attitude and action: and as personality acquires this more perfect poise, the exercise of prophetic power may become continuous, not simply concentrated in climactic performances."[12] The effect of such continuous power and command is that "<u>things grow</u>" in its presence. But this "is what chiefly happens in the presence of God. This also is historical action."[13] Thus our lives may contain some "total historical meaning" which can, by discipline or by observance, be brought to consciousness and valid expression. Believing this, history can never become wholly alien to us.

How is the prophetic consciousness possible, and what form does it

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[12] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 508

[13] <u>Ibid</u>.

take in the individual's life? Hocking says that the prophetic consciousness is not unlike reflexion. It is possible in the same way that "a total present judgment of the world is possible." The prophet must know himself and his world--if not in detail, at least in its relevance to his purposes. The crux of the matter, however, is that this knowledge comes to him through his relation to the absolute. The prophet, then, is the mystic in action, the mystic in control of the forces of history. In him the cognitive certainty of the mystic becomes historic and particular, and that certainty means an "overcoming of the world." The prophet "can only keep his certainty by making it visible to himself in historic accomplishment. Prophetic power is the final evidence to each individual that he is right and real; it is his assurance of salvation; it is his share of divinity; it is his anticipation of all attainment."[14]

Hocking notes and accepts the paradox that the mystics may be the least concerned about history while they are the most real in history. His analogy is the creativity of the artist who produces not for today or tomorrow, but addresses history, who is essentially careless of time and yet who achieves historic security. If tempted to retreat from history he dwells in the universal alone and is false. The "unhistorical mystic is a liar: he has hidden himself from the truth which is only in the face."[15] To lose one's soul is to reject

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[14] Ibid., p. 512 (underline mine)

[15] Ibid.

one's call to prophesy.

> "For if there be any immortality beyond this present scheme of things, it is not in abstraction therefrom: the destiny of our own deeds, great and small, is an integral part of whatever future there may be for us. To deserve to endure is the only guarantee of enduring. I have no faith in an intrinsic indestructibility of the substance of consciousness. One life is given us; another may be acquired. Immortality, I venture to think, may be the chief and total object of the prophetic consciousness."[16]

"If there be any immortality beyond this present scheme of things..." This question has occupied a place of considerable importance in Hocking's writing. Its importance may be emphasized by the fact that he produced a volume which is a composite of various articles written and lectures delivered on the subject throughout the years.[17] Significantly, he gave that work a title reminiscent of his first great work.[18] The fact that he has gathered his thought about the subject into one volume has simplified the research problem considerably, though parts of his other works are referred to from time to time to undergird or clarify a point. We are now ready to turn to a detailed analysis of his thought as it bears on the problem of eternal life.

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[16] Ibid., pp. 513-14

[17] "The Ingersoll Lecture on the Immortality of Man," Harvard, 1936; "The Hiram W. Thomas Lecture," University of Chicago, 1936; "The Agnes A. and Constantine E. A. Foerster Lecture on the Immortality of the Soul," University of California, Berkeley, 1942

[18] Hocking, W. E., The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957)

A PREFACE ON EMPIRICISM

Hocking begins with the assumption that "present human experience has something to say about matters commonly regarded as out of the range of empirical knowledge."[19] If the Kantian judgment, accepted by many post-Kantians, that God, Freedom, and Immortality have no scientific standing as metaphysical notions but must be given what credence they have as an act of faith or a postulate of moral convictions is to stand, it can do so only when "experience" is identified with the "reach of our sense plus the thoughtful interpretation of sense-data." Hocking will not agree that experience is so limited. In his discussion of immortality he reiterates the assertion made in his The Meaning of God in Human Experience that "unless God does operate within experience in an identifiable manner, speculation will not find him, and may be abandoned. The need for metaphysical thought arises (I venture the paradox) just because God is a matter of experience, because he works there and is known there in his works."[20] Empiricism takes on a higher dignity when it is accepted as a first principle of philosophic work that in experience we are dealing, "not with phenomena alone, but with reality,"[21] and that the task of metaphysics is to

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[19] Ibid., p. ix

[20] Hocking, The Meaning of God in Human Experience, p. 216 (We shall see that what Hocking "ventures" as a paradox is not finally a paradox at all.)

[21] _____, The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience, p. x

interpret the data of experience "in their full range, depth, and wonder, including the data of sense."[22] Hocking insists that philosophic thought recover the living concerns of mankind, and bring "the topics of God and immortality into tangible significance for the actual struggles and passions, also the intuitions, of the human lot."[23]

The question must be asked whether these topics and concerns belong together, whether immortality can be defended as pertinent to human experience in the same sense as the experience of God. One can say, as Lindbergh has said, that God's "presence can be sensed in every sight and act and incident,"[24] and his statement can be taken as no more than a practical and non-speculative affirmation about experience. But the question of immortality may present different and deeper problems precisely because the locus of the reality it suggests is future, whereas the activity of God is present. If one means merely the Idea of immortality in its present significance, the problem is comparatively simple. It can be demonstrated that ideas of immortality obviously play an effective part in present experience, as that experience is inescapably time-oriented. There is a notion of the future in all time-perspectives upon which human action proceeds. The future is neither closed nor empty.

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Lindbergh, Charles A., Of Flight and Life (New York: Scribner & Sons, 1948), p. 52

> "Since time, empty of events, is time no longer; and since time cannot check its own forward reach; each one of us willy nilly must have images of some sort for its filling. And whether these images be definite, or poetic, or dubious blur, or flitting subjective shadows evoked by cautious refusal to explore the cavern, that future-field as a whole casts its temper even now on the felt significance of one's life and of every deed issuing from it."[25]

The significance of a post-mortem vista is decidedly not post-mortem, but a pervasively present reality.

But Hocking is concerned with more than the present significance of the idea of immortality, and more than what Woodbridge once characterized as "life here" lived for "elsewhere."[26] Hocking says that most

> "post-Kantian discussions of immortality have been concerned in this way with the influence of the Idea, whether as postulate or as faith. And we shall be concerned with this meaning. But my further proposal is that unless an Idea has or can have an intelligible basis in the constitution of things, it is illegitimate, whether for postulate or faith: we must be able to say what it is we postulate or believe."[27]

He therefore assumes the responsibility for an inquiry "into the actual conditions under which alone the Idea of immortality could be legitimate,"[28] aware that his proposal faces strong currents in science and naturalism that run counter and which seem conclusive. The natural

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[25] Hocking, The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience, p. xi

[26] Woodbridge, F. J. E., An Essay on Nature (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), p. 325

[27] Hocking, The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience, p. xii (We shall see that Brightman and the Personalists would have to be excluded from the "post-Kantians" here described.)

[28] Ibid.

conditions of human life are increasingly well understood. We grow, age: senescence, a form of ungrowing, appears to be universal. Naturalism which accepts Nature as "its final course of instruction can speak with no other voice. And men like old Lucretius or newer Bertrand Russell or Corliss Lamont, who draw their literal conclusions without flinching, deserve our respect for their clear speaking."[29] One must keep the full force of their cumulative findings in view as he attempts to delineate those conditions in the human self which indicate immortality--not as idea alone, but as potential structure--and which have a present meaning in human experience. Such an attempt will have to take full account of the problem of death before it can proceed to the problem of survival.

DEATH

"The problem of the survival of death by human persons is an empirical problem for which we have no empirical evidence."[30] Philosophically, it usually assumes a secondary place as a corollary of such other views as the existence of a god concerned with individuals and forms an appendix to the given metaphysical system. The answer to the question of survival, whether it be a "yes" or a "no," very often depends upon the general world view held, and therefore receives little

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[29] Ibid., (see also pp. 169-173)

[30] Ibid., p. 3

special inquiry as a separate question. What is needed is a new approach that will shake us out of our sophistication long enough to let the problem emerge in its own right.

Of all the animals, man alone contemplates death, prepares for it, and doubts its finality. He witnesses death and notes a double response: the defeat involved in the destruction of the physical forces supporting life; and, obversely, a hesitant confidence that there is "something which breaks through the closed frame of 'nature,' holds its own in independence of what happens within 'nature,' and which might conceivably jut out immune beyond the catastrophe of death."[31] If the scientific conscience views that contradictory eddy of emotion as perversity, the common man protests that his emotion has not led him astray, but that the emotion itself is a result rather than a cause; "that he has been admitted to a momentary glimpse of objective fact in the structure of things; and that it is this fact which justifies him in ascribing to his wishes in this region a modest evidential value."[32] The wish in the situation is not so much selfishness as it is an expression of the demand that the one whose death has been witnessed "shall not have perished from the universe."[33] He does not protest the pain or inconvenience or even the personal loss in relationship. Nor does

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[31] Ibid., p. 6

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

he demand, with Kant, that infinite time be given that the moral self involved could become perfected. Rather, he rejects the idea that the universe which has produced this admirable thing should throw it away. His protest expresses outrage at an "objective unfitness."

> "Thus the notion of survival arises far more as a claim of right than as a personal wish. It is based less on the law of individual duty than on the right of affection and aesthetic justice. It is conceived as the obligation of the universe to us before it is our duty to the universe."[34]

Like the will to live, the interest in survival represents not a desire for an object, but for a subject, "not the satisfaction of any wish, but the continuance of wishing and of the wisher."[35] The will to live is in part the will to continue in consciousness. It is recognized by surgeons whose patients exhibit, beyond the dread of an operation, dread of anesthesia, "of being put out of reach of one's aliveness." The will to continue in command of consciousness itself as against the desire for the contents of consciousness may seem irrational. Yet, unless there are subjects in the world "there are either no values at all, or else no takers for such values as might be conceived to exist."[36] The interest, therefore, in the survival of conscious subjects, far from being irrational, may exhibit an instinctive and deeper rationality which understands the need of such subjects for conserving the meaning

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[34] Ibid., p. 7

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

of things.

The natural reaction to death, however, remains twofold, and what surety there is of survival is only half-sure. Primitive belief in survival in the diminished reality of ghosts, or later attempts to preserve memories of the dead with memorial stones, testify to the hesitancy of belief, the qualification of faith by doubt. The Christian cemetery represents a "vast invocation of matter to support the hesitant certainties of the immaterial."[37] The data at hand includes both the suggestion of the utter finality of death and the notion that death is an appearance and not an end.

THE ECONOMY OF DEATH

Yet, death is not without its own positive meanings. Our habit of looking upon death as an unmixed evil derives from our feeling that life is good and, from our acknowledging, with Tolstoy, that an ultimate annihilation reaches backward into time and cancels the worth of every present achievement. The opposite view would suggest, however, that death is not the wages of sin but of love. The world of finite space must contain the new generations which in love the older have begotten. Death has its economy in allowing the transmission of love, in the handing-on of life. Death makes possible a greater flexibility in history.

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[37] Ibid., p. 8 (see also p. 173)

> "Were Adam, Noah, Socrates, Confucious still among us, how we would weary of the daily rumor of their views upon the affairs of the moment: would not a certain sense of fair play bring about a conspiracy to ignore them, so that contemporary voices might sound out with due sonority and weight?"[38]

Without death, society might have to invent some substitute which would insure the progress always a part of the imprudence of the new and young who undertake the impossible. Without death, how would we deal with the monstrous inequalities of age and experience, or with the fruits of the social maxim that to him that hath it shall be given. What terminus could be set for the unending accrual of power or wisdom? The limits of life have a fitness in that they give it shape and character. "Biography is baffled unless a life, like a work of art, becomes in some sense the song of its own time, having indeed an epoch of its own, and a limited output into the public treasury."[39] Life remains plastic until death. Individuality as we know it is more a possibility when death has finished its definition than in life, for then alone has it become "complete qualitative fact, distinct from every other."[40] Here the judgment must be made that humanity as a procession is to be preferred to humanity as a fixture.

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[38] Ibid., p. 11
[39] Ibid., p. 12
[40] Ibid., p. 13

DEATH IS INDIVIDUAL

However, to speak of death in general is one thing. To ask about one's own death is another. What is to be made of the individual who must contemplate his own death? Very likely he will exhibit the current attitudes of his society, be stoic in stance or filled with fear and anxiety. In either case, death will be lonely for the simple reason that society does not die; the individual dies. The particular death is always the death of an other in society, a small diminution to the whole made more lonely as event because society cannot enter in as witness, actor, or judge.

The belief in one's personal death is not native but acquired, and late rather than soon. The immediate experience of consciousness bears with it the expectation that each moment will be followed by other moments. Indeed, a moment without future moments would not have the character of consciousness. "Hence a last moment of consciousness (as well as a first moment) is logically impossible. Neither terminus of life can be experienced; and neither can be realized in imagination."[41] This explains why the belief in one's death is acquired by intellectual process, and suggests why there are remnants of the incredulity which continue as a part of one's contemplation of his personal end. The shock of recognition of the inevitability of death may have a stern practical consequence, the handling of the time one has as infinitely

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[41] Ibid., p. 14

precious precisely because it is absolutely limited in quanity.

For Hocking this latter thought has positive value. One's heightened sense of the meaning and significance of life in time grows by conceiving of a "life time," by seeing in that limit an instancy to the moment "its once-onlyness, its Einmaligkeit!"[42] One recognizes that the "now's" are limited, that no "now" recurs, that the nature of the temporal is irreversible, undetainable, inexorable. For the individual this means that the present has what in recent years we have been calling an "existential" significance. The present is "the invisible portal through which Destiny enters, and silently, under my hands, takes on unalterable shapes...The future is always the region of possibility; but now that a boundary is drawn at its outer limit it has the added character of 'opportunity,' an opportunity which is single and unique."[43] Here, then, the self sees its limits; enters time by the sober arrival at a mature assessment of the boundary or terminus which is inescapable. In that assessment, the reality of death must be accepted, though the self may not yet be reconciled to the prospect. Curiously enough, living tends to produce the mental preparatives for its own close and, in the economy of the life cycle, not only does the body weaken and run down, but the mental savor of

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid., p. 15 (Hocking here gives a description which is reminiscent of Kierkegaard's concept of the instant, the meeting of time and eternity in freedom which involves destiny.)

life diminishes as well. It would seem that a welcome were being prepared for death while that certain visitor was yet afar off.

DEATH AND FREEDOM

There is a fitness about death in its return to an individual of the freedom he lost by becoming involved in the entanglements and the irrationalities of concrete existence. To live is to make decisions. To decide is to descend "into a world of irrelevant particulars,"[44] where from the possible choices before him one chooses one as against all the others, and inherits the consequences of being pinned down, dated, entangled, involved in a "realized existence" rather than an ideal possibility. Every decision not only helps realize the specific character of a given life, but adds a kind of dross to it. He makes his descent into the hell of particularity--his time, his tradition, his party, his destiny--knowing that to remain aloof is to die before dying. Yet the passage of time frees one from the urgency of decisions and brings a greater detachment from the "excited emphases, the eloquent self-proclaimed importances of the current world."[45] Then, and only then, death begins to mean freedom from the acquired load, the burden of the irrational, and the taste for the old battles of the arena gives way

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[44] Ibid., p. 16 (Hocking notes that despite the "irrationality" and "irrelevance" of the world of decision, it is the only way to touch the ground of concrete existence.)

[45] Ibid., p. 17

to new moods characterized by serenity.

> "This self, scarred, marked, identified, dated, need not live forever. Coming as a release and as forgiveness for the untruth of the pragmatic personality, death appears with a fitness, a necessity, even a beauty of its own."[46]

When one has reached the maturity that makes possible a reasonable detachment and the capacity to consider one's death without frantic or compulsive clinging to life as the highest good, then it is possible for him to take the risks involved in living and to admit willingness to die as part of the condition of living itself. Such acceptance gives life wider dimensions of freedom; fully developed, it is the capacity not only to risk, but to choose death. From such a vantage point as death, life becomes "a surveyable object, distinct from myself, which I can on occasion and with good will put away."[47] This may prove to be the opening through which we catch some view of what lies beyond death; not, however, without clearing the ground and laying some logical foundations upon which to build. However, before logical foundations can be laid, there is preliminary work required in treating some perennial "trivialities" which impede a clear and thoughtful judgment concerning survival.

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[46] Ibid., pp. 17-18

[47] Ibid., p. 19

LOGICAL PRELIMINARIES

What are the logical obstacles to a clear judgment of the problem of survival?

The logical work that must be done is impeded by trivialities that usually surround the discussion of immortality. Hocking has in mind such views as those which see a contest between a power called death and personal consciousness somewhat on the order of the competition between the penetrating power of a projectile and the resistance of armor plate, "as if a victory in favor of survival could be scored by showing that the soul has a certain tensile strength."[48] Another impediment equally unfruitful for the discussion is the view which centers its attention on the body-mind relationship and takes its direction from whether it conceives that relationship to be one of identity or partnership; if identity, death in the body is death for the mind; if partnership, the mind is set free conceivably to move on alone. Our distaste for such argumentation is instinctive, and it is symptomatic that the grounds of decision on these issues are not to be found "in the play of concepts, but belong rather to that region in which the felt values of things legislate for our sense of truth."[49] Logic, however, has its work to do and logical issues cannot be evaded. Logic has the function of bringing consistency into the discussion, clearing away unnecessary confusions and focusing the kind of light which any careful definition

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[48] Ibid., p. 20

[49] Ibid.

of a problem must throw upon its answer. There are kinds of logic just as there are various uses to which it can be put. One that is rejected immediately is the logic of the positivist temper of mind which declares the problem of survival to be speculative and therefore meaningless, a logic which "professes to extract all its meanings from hard facts, the modern method of milking stones."[50] For Hocking, the fallacy in such a logic has been suggested before, that the problem of survival is not speculative but a question of empirical fact--indeed a matter of events in time. By empirical fact Hocking means that in the instance of one's own survival it is a matter of "future fact" and for those already dead the issue of the "present fact" which can be stated in the question, "Are they or are they not now living and aware of anything?"[51] To affirm simply that this is a matter of experience to be verified as such fails to note that there are orders of experience. We cannot verify survival from our present experience, for the empirical fact of survival is given only to the survivors. Death breaks the line of communications with them, and whatever empirical evidence exists for them beyond death's closed doors is not accessible to us. To admit that we have no directly verifiable experience of survival does not justify our "banishing the question" any more than two nations lacking communication could deny the existence one of the other. What it means is that the problem must be

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[50] Ibid., p. 21

[51] Ibid.

approached indirectly, through speculative channels, even though it is not finally a speculative problem. It is, as Hocking puts it, "a non-speculative question which depends for its answer on speculative questions; and these speculative questions, because something particular depends on them, are saved from being meaningless, by the most positive of positivistic criteria."[52]

If Hocking cannot agree with the Positivists, neither will he admit that we are dealing with the region of probability to which many contemporary attempts to discuss the problem would consign it. The proper domain for this discussion is assigned only after the work of metaphysics is done, after the determination has been made of the order or disorder which exists in the world. One view of order may exclude survival, another demand it, a third show it possible under certain conditions. In any case "it is on the ground of these types of order that the probability of any sort has to be judged."[53] One man will see unity and dominating purpose in the universe which suggests to him that men's minds continue their adventure. Another will conceive life and consciousness as episodic and lacking purposive structure in a world which is, in last analysis, no more than physical fact. For him, survival will not only be impossible but meaningless. The first are more hopeful than certain;

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[52] Ibid., p. 22

[53] Ibid.

the second usually regard their position as "having the force of a demonstration."

Hocking is "little impressed" by "proofs" concerning the immortality of the soul from whatever quarter they come. He does not believe that the soul is intrinsically indestructible by reason of its simplicity or its character as a substance. He is left unconvinced by the usual arguments of the Idealists, "derived from the prior reality of the subject self with reference to its objects."[54] The self is not the creator of its objects, the ego is dependent on outer reality with which it cooperates, and without the resources of its object world the self would be less than a person and incapable of life. He treats with irony those forms of materialism, naturalism, realism, and technical behaviorism which approach the facts of the mind from the side of the nervous system, which have no significant place for consciousness, and which indeed on their premises "ought not to be there." Consciousness cannot be denied, nor explained by them, and for all systematic purposes is "an independent fact which observes its own laws and goes its own way in the universe."[55] The more complete the behaviorism the more superfluous is consciousness in the system it designates as "nature." From this point of view, all questions of its origin and destiny are "supernatural" and the death of the brain would have no bearing on the future of what

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[54] Ibid., p. 24

[55] Ibid., pp. 24-25

Hocking calls the self.

> "But this comment is, of course, purely negative in its value. It aids simply to relieve our minds with regard to the confident foreclosure of the question by those illogical logicians who are most emphatic in foreclosing it."[56]

There is another way the question is often foreclosed which requires more serious scrutiny. The strongest metaphysical premise pointing to a conclusion that there is no survival is "our habitual monism" which assumes that the world is one and that there is no other domain in which to lodge departed spirits.

> "Objections to other-worldliness are moral as well as structural; the social ethic and the humanistic religion of our day alike insist that the salvation of the soul and of the world shall take place in the present scene of things, and form a part of the business of human history."[57]

The older views which peopled a paradise or a place of punishment in a three-tiered world where there was access to the heights and depths has been made fantastic by the modern understanding of space. Thus our monism would conclude that if "there is another life, there must be another Nature. And if there is but one space-time order, there can be but one Nature: for Nature is defined as the system of all events in

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[56] Ibid., p. 25

[57] Hocking characterizes the immortality that is conferred on the individual by posterity or by his contribution to the ongoing history as less than immortality, as merely a transmission of mortality. This is the weakness he decries in humanism which in translating God into Society makes Him finite. "Just in the moment in which Society is made an object of worship, just by that act man is warned that Society is something he cannot worship." Science and the Idea of God (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), p. 69

the space-time universe."[58] Here one must recognize the treachery inherent in the very word "other." It is meaningful in a bounded or partial object that fronts on an "other." It is not so clear that it is meaningful when applied to the "unbounded whole of things." The difficulty arises out of a view of space that we conceive as the totality of positions swept by an expanding sphere moving out without limit from any given point, or the totality of positions that conceivably could be reached by continuous motion. Under such conditions space is unique, and no two points, wherever located, will be outside the same space. This is true notwithstanding the imaginary spaces of modern mathematics, for this science makes no assumption that there is more than one actual or real space.[59]

There may be a clue in the mathematicians' imaginary plural spaces that would allow a provisional meaning for "otherness." His spaces are created by an act of thought and reached by a shift of attention. Points in the one will not be related spatially to those of another, but by way of common mental origin. Hocking's figure for this plurality of spaces can be stated by asking the meaningless question, "How far is the stream in the picture from the floor of the room in which the picture is hung?"[60]

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[58] Hocking, The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience, p. 26 (see also p. 210) (We might ask how convincing is this part of Hocking's analysis. He has admitted the importance of the "object-world" for the existence of the mind. Here he seems to secure a freedom from his object-world by a "shift of attention" which involves "plural spaces." What, in these terms, is the relative "reality" of the worlds so conceived?)

[59] See Science and the Idea of God, p. 93f.

[60] Hocking, The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience, p. 28

The transitions for which we are looking are from world to world, a mental rather than a spatial or causal transition. The weakness, then, of our habitual monism is that it takes no account of those areas of our experience such as art, drama, and dreams, which are habitually and uncritically pluralistic.

THE MIND AND ITS BODY

Much of the common judgment concerning survival turns on the assumption of the co-variation of the mind and body, the idea that the physical life cycle and the mental life cycle not only vary but decline and die together. The modern temper follows Aristotle rather than Plato at this point, and would share the former's criticism of the way in which the latter allowed the soul to change bodies or indeed to wander about freed from the encumbrance of its "enemy of clear thought and good morals."[61] For Aristotle as for the modern physiologist, as also for the modern temper of thought generally, we admit no views of the body as a residence "of a separable tenant, still less a prison house or hindrance to moral aspiration: it is that which alone gives the soul a reason for being, a footing in the universe."[62] But being Aristotelian, modern thought has turned up a puzzle it finds difficult to solve; namely, the relation of the mind to the function of the brain. Are there two

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[61] Ibid., p. 30

[62] Ibid., p. 31

agencies controlling the same events? The brain, among other things, coordinates behavior, but so does the mind. Thus we seem to have two entities engaged in the same thing in such a way that it is difficult to sort out just how this duplicate control is to be handled. Are mind and brain identical, or shall we deny that the control apparently exercised by the mind is real? If we say that brain events are the faithful and complete image of mental events, though possibly in another medium, we may state the "exact and unique fitness between a given mind and a given body," while we also are readmitted into Plato's cosmos. "This dream body is thus 'another' body than the waking body, somewhat in the sense imagined by Plato, while yet conforming strictly to the principle of unique fitness to the individual mind insisted upon by Aristotle."[63] We are driven, therefore, to a more complete analysis of the problem of the mind and its objects, of the self and its world.

THE SELF AND THE WORLD

Hocking notes that any inquiry today which begins with such pairs of concepts as mind-body, subject-object, self-physical world, and assumes that they are well understood, may be true to the testimony of common experience, but the discovery will soon be made that any technical use of them usually hides an ancient trap. One may want to say

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[63] Ibid., p. 34

about these things what Augustine said about time, that one knows full well what it is until someone asks him. The natural starting point of "immediate experience," in spite of all attempts to keep it neutral as between the mind which experiences and the objects which it experiences, is found to be tainted by a subjective and private quality. Science, on the other hand, begins with the physical object, and seeks the refinement of its observation of its object-world by more precise and adequate tools of analysis. Thus there are two languages: that of "physicalism" which makes provision for everything except the mind and which would have a "cleaner" picture if consciousness were omitted; and that of subjective language which can account for everything except the real physical world and would be cleaner if such concepts as matter, energy, substance, and causality were omitted. For the first view, "the self is within the world," for the second, "the world is within the self." Logic cannot choose between these languages; science chooses as a matter of convenience and uses both. The common man suspects that inside this linguistic difference there hides an issue in which his very fate is at stake.

If we trace out the implications of these two languages, the issues concerning man's fate will become increasingly clear. If the self is in the world, it is finite in space and time as one self in a world of other and separate selves. If the world is within the self, then it is finite as an aspect of experience rather than of space and time, and the same self might have many worlds.

> "If the self is within the world, the death of the self is also an event within the one world, and as much a mark of the temporal finitude of the self as its birth: there is nothing of the self beyond that boundary. If the world is within the self, death as an event within the world has no necessary value as a time boundary of the self."[64]

When the issues are seen to be so large, the common man feels that he has more to be gained or lost than a purely linguistic debate. He looks at the long debate between idealism and realism with their divergent concern with "experience" and "physical things"; he hears the logician of today doubting if the "talk about realities" has any assignable meaning; he remembers that the word "reality" has meant for him that which endures, corrects errors, and explains appearance. Thus, it "seems to him a highly concrete issue whether one ascribes these properties to the sort of thing we call a thought or to the sort of thing we call a quantum of energy."[65] If the scientists and logicians are unwilling to answer his questions with more than the indifference of "either language is admissible," can not his own concrete interests be served by translating this into "Both views of reality are true." His experience seems to confirm both views. The concrete world of objects would surely be the measure of reality when he considers the wavering and vulnerable character of his own consciousness. If only he could have the reality of a stone! Looking at the natural world from which he comes, he

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[64] Ibid., p. 40

[65] Ibid.

acknowledges his continual dependence upon it and feels impelled to admit that he is only as real as his world. On the other hand, thoughts and feeling might better be the measure of reality. The stone which is empty of consciousness cannot be as "real" as an experience of joy or suffering. From such a view, the world is at best only as real as he is, and derives "its accent of actuality" from the circumstance that he is conscious of it. Thus the standard of reality "passes from object to subject and back again; neither of these modes of judgment is to be rejected; the standard must somehow be twofold and the truly concrete and durable being, the 'real,' must include both."[66]

The fruit of Hocking's discussion of the relation of self and world, and "which is in the other," leads to what he calls the principle of "empirical duality."[67] This is the awareness that the observer not only observes his world but also himself. To the problem of duality we now turn.

SELF AND SUBCONSCIOUS

Psychology provides disconcerting evidence that it cannot tell us much about either the self or the subconscious. Hocking says that to be a science psychology must deal with sensations, thoughts, feelings or their physical expressions. Thus it deals with the contents of the

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[66] Ibid., p. 42

[67] Ibid.

self, not with the self.[68] There is no "sensation of the self" to make it an identifiable object. The "I" which is prefaced to every datum such as "I see" or "I hear" informs us about sight and hearing, but not about the self. Empirical psychology "tends to dispose of the self in the simple assumption that certain mental states are together with others."[69] Descriptive psychology may go farther than this and ask about the activity of the self, about the way the contents of it cohere, get associated, attended to, emphasized, or forgotten. But these activities may be disposed of as "contents, so to speak, of a second order, under such names as 'attention,' 'disposition,' 'active set.' They call for no reference to an imperceptible agent, the self; for what the science is concerned with is the events, not the agent; the changes, not the hypothetical and constant source of change."[70] Psychology resembles Kant's transcendental unity of apperception which by its very definition as subject could never be an empirical object. As long, then, as psychology is bent on achieving status as a natural science, it cannot be asked to deal with any self except the self which is an object within nature.

Hocking believes that the clues to the more inclusive self are to be found in what the psychologists have consigned to the "confused and

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[68] In a chapter on "Psychology and the Cure of Souls" in his book, Science and the Idea of God, Hocking accuses psychology of a narrowness of method which can never do justice to the full scope or purpose of selfhood. "Psychology must recognize that feeling is essentially metaphysical, and that the whole emotional life of man is affected by that restlessness of which Augustine spoke until it has established its relation with the Most Real.", p. 48

[69] Hocking, The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience, p. 45

[70] Ibid., (see also pp. 116-118)

fumbling theory of the subconscious."[71]

The subconscious cannot be likened merely to a storehouse, cellar, or catch-all for miscellaneous rejected states of mind. It is more than memory, for it contains the lessons of past experience. "Of this forever-accumulating multitude of shades for which we may still conveniently use the term 'apperceptive mass,' we may say that we are not thinking _of_ it chiefly because we are always thinking _with_ it."[72] One sees the drawing together of _subconscious_ and _self_ in the further analysis of repressions and possibilities or powers, both of which are assigned in some way to the subconscious but which are constitutive of the self. It is "I" who repress aggressions and suffer the results of that repression. The powers that reside in any person are powers of the self, and there is a quality of "infinitude" of self expressed in the fact that no limit is drawn, or, as Hocking puts it, there is a "_negative wholeness_, an absence of boundary...Few human beings are inclined to assert omniscience; yet few confront the world originally as if there were anything there they could not understand."[73] The _apperceptive mass_, with its contents of memory and potentiality, gives experience structure. My self, then, is a felt system of powers and possibilities which is able to "attend, evaluate, choose, discard, both among my objects and among my impulses toward those objects: the ingredients of 'sub-consciousness'

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[71] _Ibid._, p. 46

[72] _Ibid._

[73] _Ibid._, p. 48

are empirical ingredients of myself--of the self which hovers over experience, the inclusive, observing and judging self."[74] This capacity of judging and controlling one's self is the source of what Hocking calls an "empirical duality."

THE EXCURSIVE AND REFLECTIVE SELVES

The self acting within the world, the observed self, the lower level of the self, is called "excursive" because, says Hocking, it is to be understood not as a stream of consciousness, but as a series of excursions in which the self ventures, acts, learns, and returns. The single excursions have a unity and become "paragraphs" of personal history having integral time epochs that belong to them alone. The reflective self has an independence from the "attached, occupied and dated self: its cumulative judgments of that self and of its reports contribute to the building of that 'apperceptive mass' which is its empirical substance."[75] Such an analysis, Hocking believes, makes it possible to interpret the way in which the self is a "union of opposites" just as it gives empirical meaning to the assertions that the self is actual and potential, finite and infinite, that it is a union of the temporal and the eternal. The latter statement needs the further interpretation that the excursive and the reflective selves stand in different relations to time. The first is immersed "in the time flow of the physical environment with

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[74] Ibid., pp. 49-50

[75] Ibid., pp. 51-52

which it deals;".[76] The second inhabits a roomier unbounded whole within which the temporal events of excursive activity are placed. Indeed, it is the reflective self that holds time together and gathers up the broken fragments of it into wholeness and gives it continuity. It keeps the flight of "now's" from disappearing and makes their succession knowable. "This capacity to hold successive moments in consciousness at once without losing their time spread is familiar to philosophers--familiar as one of the standing wonders of experience which still awaits satisfactory interpretation."[77] Eternity has been made more difficult to understand by assuming it to be something in contrast to time rather than seeing it as "the essence of the time order." Time constitutes an order only as the multitude of its moments or occasions are gathered together into wholeness, into a class, or are held in one thought. The reflective self holds this gathered time in "negative wholeness;" that is, it holds it without a sense of beginning or end, and, while it does not hold the "actual infinitude" of sidereal years together in a moment, it can conceive of a thousand years as quickly as it can ten minutes. "In this sense, time is within the reflective self, whereas the dated self is in time. The reflective self is not timeless, nor out of time: it has its own acts of decision and

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[76] Ibid., p. 53

[77] Ibid.

moments of review which are dated; yet in a single act it pervades all time."[78] Here we come to the dividing line between the self and the physical world. The self alone has the time spread, the past and a future that is inconceivable for the world of nature. The processes of nature may erode this or that geological formation, but the awareness of the time factor in that erosion is available to the geologist, not to the eroded objects. There is a glorious and appalling agelessness of the physical facts, for there is "no time summation in the roots of nature...But for a being with memory, items may accumulate and retain their distinctiveness and their place forever, without crowding, because the mental time order is a true additional dimension of being, not another of the simultaneous dimensions of space."[79]

The reflective self confers an endurance, a kind of immortality, upon events that would otherwise be gone. Even the monuments we build to past events or persons would be meaningless, apart from the capacity to remember what they memorialized. But memory is not mechanical so much as it is selective: we build our history out of materials which remain plastic until we make judgments concerning what is fit to endure. Thus we must say more than that the reflective self surveys time. We may even surmise that it is "involved in the being of time, and is therefore durable in its own nature."[80] It is not the same nature to

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[78] Ibid., p. 54
[79] Ibid., p. 55
[80] Ibid., p. 56

which I awake in the morning that gives me back my same self. It is the same self in its continuity that gives me a recognizable world. "The reflective self administers the time dimension both for the excursive self and for its world of nature."[81] When this has been seen with clarity, one can move on beyond the traditional contest between the philosophies of substance and flux, beyond the worship of the stone by the one and the worship of death by the other. We are as well rid of the "material pellet which lurked under the shell of the substantial 'soul,'" as we are well rid of the incapacity of the flux philosophy in which "the self has no account to give of its own persistences." In the reflective self we have the stable mode of being that observes its own flickering. Without this deeper dimension of the self, even the flux could not be known. For Hocking, this means that the reflective self is creative and the dated or excursive self its creation. In this creation the objective order of things is modified and changed as the self emerges. Through countless decisions we shape the self we aim to become, thus the self-consciousness of the moment is gathered up into the task of a larger consciousness of the self which we will, with a lifetime, become.

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[81] Ibid., p. 57

> "With these distinctions in mind between the two selves which constitute our working human self--the reflective self, which is (relatively) potential, infinite, time-inclusive, time-continuous, creative; the excursive self, which is (relatively) actual, finite, time-limited, time-discontinuous, created--we may now return to review the meanings of death."[82]

CREATIVITY AND FREEDOM

Hocking holds, almost as an article of faith, that one is incapable of conceiving his own death except as survivor. He believes it unthinkable that the self could come to the experience of an absolute end, precisely because the ability to designate the end suggests a vantage point beyond it. This means that the death that is conceived as a possibility is the death of the excursive self and can be interpreted through the principle of duality. The dated self, which will always be unfinished, may reach the terminus of its "actual" existence, though it will always do so in mid-motion, and never because it is satisfactorily completed. But does the death of the excursive self mean that the reflective self shares in the same end? The answer to that question turns on the meaning that is assigned to creativity and freedom.

If decision means no more than a choice of pre-existent possibilities from an "fnfinite grab bag of eternal possibilities," which for the

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[82] Ibid., p. 59 (See also Part III, chapter four, "The Making of a Self," which concludes: "We care for being more than for achievement because being, in this sense, is an enduring potentiality; and this can only signify potentiality for further life. The self that is produced, one's dated creation, this self vanishes; the reflective self, having attained a measure of reality in that creative deed, is ready for another stage, not excluding the first, in knowing and embodying the depth of being." p. 152)

moment are given body in actualized existence, then human life is reduced to duplication, not to creation. For Hocking the act of creation involves much more. Bach gives the world "something which God Himself had never thought."[83] The reflective self gives more to the world than it receives, which is to say that it is authentically and uniquely creative. Beyond the dated self to which it manages to give birth, the reflective self may contain "germs of other gestations" which in its "maternal prowess" it continues.

> "For in this creativity of the reflective self there lies the possibility of relation to other worlds which are also actual worlds. The self, in its freedom, is always standing as the bridge of connection between plural space-time orders."[84]

The actual world we now experience as the world of the excursive self has no monopoly on reality. The world at hand may give way to another nature and another world of selves, and severance from the present occasions might mean the "beginning connection with another group."[85] Hocking conceives the transition as intramental from one world order to another, not as "simply moreness" of the world one has had but the dawning of new types of being, deeper categories of thought made possible by greater capacity for knowing. The duality conceived in the self thus leads to a capacity to conceive a radical "otherness" in the universe. Beyond the shallow others such as place and task, death may usher in the thoroughly

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[83] Ibid., p. 63 (see also p. 218)
[84] Ibid., p. 64 (see also p. 194)
[85] Ibid.

other, the other life, the "passage from the labored sketch to the freedom of a new canvas, or from the apprenticeship in creativity to the exercise of a maturer art."[86] Thus the tired realities of the dated self, the lost momentum and fertility, might give way not to eternal rest, which could be desired only by the excursive self for which life had lost its savor, but to the "renewal of that negative wholeness of the subconscious self which is its innocence of limitation. It would mean passage to another effort, with revised direction, in an ampler world."[87] In activity rather than in rest the soul would continue its quest and craving for that which is not, in loyalty to its goal, faithfulness to its destiny. If any selves go on they are selves that suffer; but they are also the lovers of life, not its haters."[88] Thus the great reasons for and the nature of survival are suggested by the categories of freedom and creativity.

DURATION AND VALUE

At this juncture Hocking is satisfied that the logical preliminaries are finally out of the way, that the common reasons upon which immortality are rejected as impossible vanish under close examination. The judgment can now be made that, though it is not verifiable by us nor seen clearly in the imagination, the idea of another life is not devoid of meaning.

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[86] Ibid., p. 65
[87] Ibid., p. 66
[88] Ibid., (see also p. 87)

Yet our eventual judgment about this matter belongs in another domain, that of intuition concerning the world we inhabit.[89] But in placing his emphasis on intuition, Hocking does not wish to accept Bergson's position which, says Hocking, is an appeal to intuition as against the intellect and ends in a divorce between vitality and intelligence. For Hocking, intuition has a valid place in the search for meaning and is part of the intellect. What intuition grasps, in a dim and sometimes primitive way, is capable of a rational expression that lends rather than diminishes its force. Thus there can be no war between intuition and intellect. Intuition, guided by analogy, attunement, and valuing, will determine the final judgment concerning survival. The analogies will consider the other rhythms of life and death within life, as in the death of childhood and the rebirth beyond it in larger maturity. By attunement Hocking means a "just balance of judgment in the perpetual tension in ourselves between a sobriety which may be dull and unseeing and a vision which may be visionary."[90] In his use, valuing refers to a total sense of fitness or rightness of one fate or another. The shape of the new world that lies open to the intuition now becomes the object of study and analysis; the first item in that world is the "truth that <u>duration is a dimension of value</u>."[91]

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[89] For a full interpretation of Hocking's use of "intuition" see pp. 103-109, <u>The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience</u>.

[90] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 67

[91] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 68

The assessment that quality alone is of value and that prolongation adds no worth to it is refuted from the common experience that the high moments of life, long anticipated and long remembered, occupy a long "time room" in consciousness.[92] The aftergrowth of the event fills out its full and proper meaning or value. Viewed in this perspective, life means more as a continued than as a closed affair. The affirmation can be made that since life is a closed affair, one should not think of death but give all his effort to living along the way. But, says Hocking, the prospect of an absolute end cuts the nerve of present effort. Nor can one be truly consoled by the thought that the race goes on, that there is progress for humanity, or that to institutions accrue the values given up by the individual. This is the "fallacy of totalism" which does not understand that the individual secures the race--not the race the individual. Man lives in a precarious environment which may, by any one of a variety of accidents, be doomed. If the individual does not preserve the mental treasures, their prospect is extinction. The supposition that the conservation of values in the universe is guaranteed by the rise of new generations overlooks the observable fact that new consciousness cannot replace the consciousness of the old because it cannot inherit its history. The loss of memories constitutes a loss of meaning. With memory comes the preservation of history's treasures, such cultural

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[92] Hocking states the paradox of meaning in two propositions: There can be no meaning in life unless there is immediate meaning, and there can be no sufficient meaning of life in immediacy alone. (See p. 98) of The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience.)

gains as art and science. These are called by Hocking "the Unlosables,"[93] the accumulating mass of which fortifies the human race against the "frustrating rhythm of rise and decay in civilizations."

What then can be eternal in the universe if the individual does not survive? Various philosophers have considered eternal things as diverse as space, time, atoms, the total energy of the world, the sum of energy and mass. These are the ultimates of physical analysis. Again ideas and truths and laws of change have been considered eternal. But in either class or in every case within the class, no one of them knows its own eternity. The crucial question will then be why, if lastingness is a value, it is not absurd indeed that the everlasting things will never be aware of their status as eternals. Shall man, who alone knows of the perpetuity, be the one to perish? "It is in such rejections of absurdity that the intuitions of mankind most clearly speak--more clearly than in a positive affirmation that immortality must be true."[94] At its height, the sense of indestructibleness, the intimation of survival comes as

> "something seen and clearly judged; as if one had been admitted for an instant to the weighing places of the powers of the universe, and had perceived that this sort of thing, the self, cannot be destroyed...It is , I believe, what Plato meant when he said that there is something in the nature of life which cannot mingle with death."[95]

For the majority, intuitive assurances can do no more than give a confidence

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[93] Hocking, The Coming World Civilization, Study III, "The Structure of History"

[94] _____, The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience, p. 71

[95] Ibid.

that, though death plows deep, it does not break the links and cables of renewal.[96]

Intuition focuses finally on what ought to be, on what is in some final sense fit and proper for the self in the world. The danger here is converting a persuasion that survival must be possible to the conviction that it is necessary and universal. Hocking refuses to base his case on the inherent indestructibility of the soul. He rejects the monad theories which in one form or another assume the soul to eternally pre-exist as well as to perdure.[97] Survival might result from other causes than inherent indestructibility, as for instance that of protective power from outside, from compliance with a law, or the happy accident that destructive forces pass one by. One notices that alongside the intuition of continuance there exists another of dependence. The analogy of history is instructive at this point, for it indicates how a form of immortality is conferred on the individual by the state as ordered human society preserves the fruits of individual labor.[98] Shakespeare's sonnets have no future apart from a society that receives and carries them into some sort of permanence.

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[96] Ibid., (see p. 186 following on "The Relativity of Death")

[97] Hocking names in this rebuttal, "Leibniz and Personalists, McTaggart and Howison." The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience, p. 199

[98] Hocking characterizes the "experiment in detachment" in Oriental and Stoic and Christian attempts to find meaning for the self by withdrawing from the world and rejecting biological and social goods, as a kind of nightmare of otherworldliness always doomed to failure. p. 126

> "Human deeds thus borrow their immortality from the state, which trafficks in that article; and man makes the state![99] So perhaps in the cosmic order there is a thing essentially eternal; and there may be conditions under which the human self participates in its quality."[100]

This is Hocking's view: survival is a possibility but not a necessity of destiny. Though our lives begin without our conscious consent, they become what we conceive to be fit. We shape our destiny. Under such terms, the soul which cultivates a distaste for life is not doomed to continue against its will. For one who sought to make his life a completed whole, the career of the self coinciding with that of the body, the rational animal ending in nothing; for such, if there are such, survival is not a necessity. The quality of the human self is not, for Hocking, "immortality but immortability, the conditional possibility of survival."[101]

Given survival as a possibility, the next question naturally will concern the conditions by which one secures it. Hocking stands in independence of most of the traditional answers of the West when he considers what those conditions are. Neither from books, institutions, from any one person, nor from a society or historical tradition, from a set of mystical disciplines nor from conformity to a code of conduct will the answer be given. Further, one does not know what survival will

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[99] The political implications of this insight are worked out in detail in Hocking's book, The Lasting Elements of Individualism, and specifically in the section, "The Incompressible Individual," p. 132f.

[100] Hocking, The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience, p. 73

[101] Ibid., p. 74

be like, any more than he knows what it is that keeps him alive in the present. He might suspect what it is not--not the possibility of any natural prowess, acquired capacities, or the work or merit of the excursive self. Whatever it is that can see a man through and beyond death must be simple and near as breathing, yet elusive as that which now keeps him in being. "Perhaps our figure of the germinal self may offer an inkling: the process of living this present life <u>well</u> might render the fertile soul pregnant with otherness, and unknown to itself gravitant toward a new birth."[102]

The essence of the great traditions can be stated in this way, for they indicate that survival may be a matter of the "degree of reality" which the self attains.[103] The dominant note in that reality will be love which puts away sham and deceit, and clings to the inner realities of things.

> "One is as real, we said, as what one can create out of oneself; and only the lover knows what to create, and how. The durability of the self, we think, must depend much on the truth of its interpretation of love--itself a riddle deeper than that of the Sphinx--for love, which as Plato saw is a longing to make immortal, is also in its promise a power to become immortal: 'He that loveth aright is born of the immortal One.'"[104]

One cannot help noticing that the word "God" does not appear until

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[102] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 75

[103] Hocking later speaks of learning what it is to be a self, not from a variety of careers or gaining wisdom through failure, but by "building a self, a process which is an effort toward embodying reality." p. 146

[104] _____, <u>The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience</u>, p. 75 (For a further discussion of the implications of love in the variety and meaning it gives to life, see pp. 89-92.)

the end of Hocking's analysis--a fact not to be overlooked. There is, he concludes, an "outer fact" on which survival depends, not "substance" or "energy," for these cannot receive what a man offers at death. Death is not the blotting out of life by an entity called Death, nor by an entity called Nature." It is rather an encounter of the real with the Real: and whatever else may be said of the real, it is not inanimate, but conscious and living. With this Hocking is ready to rest the case. This may be all we need to know about the character of survival; "but what we chiefly know is that it ought to be. For unless there is a way for the continuance of the human self, the world is full of the blunt edges of human meanings, the wreckage of human values, and therefore of the failures of God."[105]

One may not be ready to settle the matter at this point, particularly if he feels the need to question the methodology which has brought Hocking to his conclusion. When one remembers that Hocking's idealism is tempered by a strong element of mysticism, he will be driven to explore the contribution his mysticism makes to his argument, and even more the way in which intuition is used to explore those dimensions of the self which are generally conceded to lie beyond the reach of rational analysis. Here we will encounter again the assumptions he makes about his world which have been implicit in all his analyses to this point.

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[105] Ibid., p. 76

MYSTERY AND INTUITION

The conclusion of Hocking's inquiry into the meaning of immortality is not, he says, a metaphysical doctrine, but rather a proposal about certain conditions which are necessary if human life is to have an adequate meaning.

One condition on which he insists is that human life must have a "supplement, a perspective of perpetuity." Another condition is that this present existence "may be considered as an invitation to take on reality, understanding by this term, not the phenomenal and passing reality which we have in hand, but a complete and radical reality--an equivalence to whatever powers there are in the world which environs us."[106] Here Hocking begins to elaborate a concept of provisional immortality in which the chances of survival are correlated with the "reality" one manages to achieve. Could one attain full reality, the survival of death would necessarily follow, for the real lasts. Since, however, we can attain only a degree of reality, there is only a possibility that this may carry through the crisis of death. The survival of death, then, is not to be seen as necessary (as in Plato) but dependent upon the "realness" one comes to possess.

The evidence for this position lies in intuition, an aspect of experience shared by the primitive and the modern who has not lost it by

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[106] Ibid., p. 153

reason of his science or sophistication. Hocking describes intuition variously as an innocence of mind which carries on its living as though there were to be no temporal end of its being,[107] and as an underlying sense of unlimited ongoing, all of which is valued and the end of which would cancel out the whole to zero. Intuition is most fully developed in the mystic who eludes the philosopher's task, the forcing into intellectual cages and conceptualizing into the prisons of categories what must forever escape those cages and prisons. The working assumptions of the mystics which refuse to be packaged into definitions can generally be stated as follows: "that there is a meaning in the whole of things;[108] that we are always dimly aware of it; and that it is possible to raise the dim awareness to a firm immediate conviction."[109] The mystic rejects the "live as if" of pragmatism and, indeed, in his certainty does not need it. If we question him about his certainty, he refers us to immediate experience, to the primitive innocence which asserts "No end." To this he adds the more positive assertion that he has an "indefinable awareness of ultimate worth in what he now does."[110] What he has now as immediately

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[107] Ibid., p. 154

[108] At the conclusion of his Science and the Idea of God, Hocking writes "...we can have no confirmation of which we are in search--the presence of purpose in the whole of things--until the mystic's directness, immediacy, and assurance can be recovered in the common experience of men with the facts of nature." p. 112

[109] _____, The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience, p. 156

[110] Ibid., p. 157

felt meaning belongs to all possible future meaning, for he can conceive no separation between present and future meanings. Whatever meaning life may come to possess hereafter

> "must be simply the ampler interpretation of the meaning which it now has. I could not seek it, had I no present clue to what I am seeking. I could not yearn for what is not here, unless yearning could contemplate that which is missing, and in contemplating enjoy its image."[111]

The activism of the Realist is not foreign to the mystic and presents no threat. His career in time involves actions which affect others besides himself, encounters with whom allow him to transmit such reality as he has attained. The mystic view transcends the realist view in the sense that the mystic can be a Realist, whereas the Realist cannot be a mystic without breaking his realistic frame of being. The mystic gives wholeness and amplitude of horizon to the daily task, and enlivens the realistic temper of present activity with larger scope and fuller meaning.

> "If there is not total meaning, none of the daily details can conserve importance. If there is an eternal meaning, there is nothing in all futurity than some of the things which human life, here in the middle of time, may contain. If there is an absolute sense of existence, life has nothing better to do, at any time, than to move toward the human encounter in which real may speak to real, and in so doing give alms to the Absolute."[112]

The problem remains to assign the function and reach of intuition, now that it has been admitted as one of the human capacities in the

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[111] Ibid., p. 159

[112] Ibid., p. 162

search for truth and meaning. It will not, and should not, admit us beyond the veil which, for our good, has been placed by "God and Nature" between ourselves and a clear view of our survival. Here one moves between two perils: that of rationalizing what is beyond the instruments of analysis on the one hand; and on the other of surrendering to the irrational and forsaking the responsibilities of thought.

> "Intuition is not irrational; if it is valid at all, it contains an invitation to think--it has its rendezvous with reason, and must make its welcome good in the fullest light we can otherwise bring to bear as to the destiny of the soul."[113]

Hocking goes beyond Bergson, for whom intuition suggests the habitually subliminal and dim reaches of awareness, to insist that intuition is knowledge not averse to conceptual interpretation, but "requiring to be thought into a unity with the rest of our knowledge."[114] Yet with Whitehead he is willing to give the last word to the common intuition of mankind as a matter "of simple epistemological wisdom."[115]

> "It belongs to the justice of the world--and the brotherhood of the race--that whatever has significance for living comes within the conspectus of the plain man, as intuition. Intuition, as a persistent awareness of, and reaction to, the real, is our most directly empirical relation to the world, the most universal, the most unrelenting."[116]

The work of thought is to be done as one side of mutual dependence; for

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[113] Ibid., p. 194
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Hocking, The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience, p. 195

intuition rescues thought from being pallid, and thought guards against the ambiguities of intuition. In cooperation they may illumine and clarify the elemental certitudes which can be affirmed concerning survival.

The elemental certitude Hocking affirms is of self awareness, not simple as in Plato, nor substantial as in Descartes, nor yet as monadic as in Leibnitz, but as free and active in the relation of the self to its world of common objects. The power to act freely is the power to effect change in the world-not-myself; in other words to create.

> "If the power to create is an outcome of a power-to-choose in creation, the self is exercising what is generally called 'freedom;' meaning here freedom in the metaphysical sense of power to originate concrete fact."[117]

The implications of this freedom are most clearly seen in our acting within and upon a world having the objectivity of structure revealed by our thinking. Imagination becomes the source of our creative action and in its interplay with the actual possibilities at hand becomes the link with the reality of the objective order. The use of freedom then involves the possible command of nature, so that what happens is what I, and not nature, will. If, therefore, in our power to create, we are in a position, however narrow and perilous, to dictate the happening of nature, there is in our being something outside of nature. And what is outside of nature, in relation of control, is not at that point at

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[117] Ibid., p. 201

the mercy of perishings within nature.[118] Hocking accepts this elemental certitude of concrete freedom as the basis for the analytic examination of the judgment that survival is possible. The experience of freedom offers light upon the _that_ of survival. The _how_ of freedom can perhaps do as much for the how of survival, a matter to which the imagination can fruitfully turn.

The language of myth and symbol has been the chief tool of philosophy and public when they have considered the how of survival. The language of imagination is not an evasion of objective truth; and some measure of metaphysical insight gives vitality, even during periods of growing scientific sophistication, to the "play of poetic and prophetic imagery in this field." To discipline the free play of fancy a _responsible imagination_ is needed for exploration and criticism, an imagination "tamed by the demands of realism." An analogy might be the imagination in the field of science which replaces poorer hypotheses with better, and corrects the flaws of inventions. Both the Copernican Revolution and the Einsteinian Relativity were feats of imagination which were both inventive and disciplined. Hocking proposes that we submit our imaginings of another world to the test of a critical imagination which might reveal what structure in the universe could permit survival or show "the nature of the hinge between one life and another."[119] Irresponsible imagining has usually fancied the passage from this life to the

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[118] _Ibid._, p. 202

[119] _Ibid._, p. 206

beyond as a journey of the soul from one region to another, a supposition which the responsible imagination must treat as the problem of plural spaces. Thought that is tenable must employ another system than spatial transition, even though there followed upon the work of Bruno and Galileo the inevitable speculations concerning whether they had discovered, in finding mountains and lakes on the moon, the abode provided for spirits of the departed. The hinge, however, is not spatial, not a journey, not a passage from compartment to compartment, not "a crossing of a stream, whether Jordan or Styx." Such figures distract us from the "inwardness of the event" and its essential simplicity. Bunyan's transition from waking to sleeping, and from the present world of external reality to the dream world of his Pilgrim's progress toward the Heavenly City is a more fitting "hinge of transition."

The issue at stake if one accepts mental transition as the key can be stated as the problem of whether the dream world is not subjective, insubstantial, and deficient in reality. This opens again the "issue of the relation of the 'mental' and the 'real.'"[120] Hocking would affirm no more than that the experience of the dream reveals a structural possibility in the universe of transitions from state to state. He believes we are on stronger ground if the analogy is shifted from the duality of dream-real world to the variant possibilities confronting the individual

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[120] Ibid., p. 209

in making free choices. What he does not choose to create has a higher order of possible reality than the dream world, especially if it was a genuine possibility. The double area of potential reality emerges as the different selves we might have been had we made different choices, for whatever reason, from those we actually made. The same case can be made for the duality of the self-in-the-world which observes itself in the world. It means for Hocking that

> "the world contained within the observing self is not identical with the world which contains the observed self--two worlds, descriptively the same, ontologically different, held together by the intention of an identical self, assuming two roles in relation to its environment."[121]

It is a matter of common experience to feel this disjunction when in self-accusation we are the judging and the judged self. What this implies Hocking calls "an inner plurality of perspective" which validates an other life and an other world within the self. This capacity for double awareness and the kindred experience of our freedom in which we are both creator and creature implies a "double posture in the universe."[122] At no point, Hocking believes, is the case stronger than in this dual quality of the self as creator and creation. The task of life is not to fulfill a destiny designed by the Master, but to produce what, without our effort, the universe would not contain. Not even God

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[121] Ibid., p. 212

[122] Hocking, The Meaning of God in Human Experience, p. 153f

has pre-thought your conception, for your creation, within its bounds, is as real, and your freedom as real as His.[123]

From the vantage point of this conception of freedom and creativity survival is seen, not as the completion of a preassigned plan or duty as Kant would have it, but in a way that requires the universe to do its duty by us, allowing us to participate in the Last Judgment and to know the worth or lack of it in what we aspired to do, indeed to be part of that judgment as we "stand self-judged, not judged alone by an absolute Other."[124] So conceived, an existence annulled at death by an absolute end would call for a moral indictment of the very nature of things.

> "In a world that lets die, the faith of the doer remains at best a tragic question thrown out upon an unheeding Process of Nature--for with the best assurance, faith and work look forward, far forward--not for praise, but for truth."[125]

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123 _____, The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience, p. 218

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid., pp. 218-219

THE PERSONALISM OF E. S. BRIGHTMAN

American personalism has its roots in the teleological idealism of the German, Lotze. The lineage is easily traced by recalling the influence of Lotze on Bowne and of Bowne on Brightman. It has been noted that Kant's ethical approach to religion had widespread influence during the nineteenth century. In the thought of Fichte the moral self was conceived to be a metaphysical principle by which the structure and purpose of the universe itself was explained.[1] It was in Hermann Lotze, however, during the middle decades of the century that Kant's ethical position was developed most fully in its bearings on general philosophical problems.

Windleband characterizes Lotze's thought as teleological idealism, a system in which,

> "every individual real entity has its essential nature only in the living relations in which it stands to other real entities; and these relations which constitute the connected whole of the universe are possible only if all that is, is grounded as a partial reality in a substantial unity, and if thus all that takes place between individuals is to be apprehended as purposeful realization of a common life goal."[2]

For Lotze, knowledge was conceived as a vital and purposive interaction between the soul and other "substances." Developing its own nature in the forms of perception, the soul receives general truths which come

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[1] Burtt, E. A., Types of Religious Philosophy (New York: Harper & Bros. 1939), p. 272

[2] Windleband, W., A History of Philosophy (tr. by Tufts) (New York: Macmillan, second edition, 1901), pp. 643-644

to consciousness with immediate clearness from the stimulus of things. The soul's participation makes the world of ideas a realm of values in which the good is realizing itself. "The coming to actual reality of this work of consciousness is the most important result of the interaction of substances."[3] This interaction and the resulting consciousness is the ultimate and truest meaning of the world-process. The self, or person, in Lotze's theory is an ultimate, empirical reality, whose unity is given as basic to both experience and nature. Citing Lotze's work, Brunner comments on the paradox that the same things which give man his absolute value as a self, and in so doing make him an individual, also place him just as absolutely in community and give him an incomparable association with others.[4] In other words, all that exists is connected existence, and the parts of the physical organism that make up its whole are not unlike the individuals who make up the social organism of the community. Lotze has gone the additional step and affirmed that God is the unconditioned transcendent Person, of whom all finite beings are parts without losing their individuality, and through

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[3] Ibid., p. 644 Windleband comments that Lotze's placing of values at the summit of logic and metaphysics provided impetus for new schools which make a "theory of values" a new foundation science in philosophy, a development that "can do no harm if these move in part in the psychological and sociological realm, provided it is not forgotten that in establishing facts and making genetic explanations we have only gained the material upon which philosophy itself must perform its task of criticism." (Ibid., p. 681)

[4] Brunner, E., Man in Revolt (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1947) p. 288f.

whom alone they enjoy reciprocal action.[5] Lotze's is a monism in which, as he puts it, "there cannot be a multiplicity of independent things, but all elements...must be regarded as parts of a single and real being."[6] Lotze's influence was international.

In England there was a movement from neo-Hegelianism toward personalism represented by Pringle-Pattison and C. C. J. Webb who reacted against the impersonalism of Bradley and Bosanquet. Personalism has developed in America within the idealist framework, but opposed to the absolute idealism of Royce and Hocking. There have been two main groups: the California Personalists Howison and Flewelling and the Boston Personalists of whom Bowne, Brightman, and Knudson are the best known. Inasmuch as our interest here concerns Brightman, we need do no more than recall his relation to his great teacher, Borden Parker Bowne.

After attending New York University as an undergraduate, Bowne went in 1871 to Halle and Goettingen, Germany, for two years of study. He studied with Erdmann, Ulrici, and finally Lotze from whose idealism Bowne received much of the inspiration for the form his thought was to take. Uponhis return to the United States he followed journalism until he was called to Boston University in 1876 where he taught until his death in 1910. He is remembered as a great teacher, his influence being not

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[5] A system that, along with his Logik and Metaphysik, received its fullest elaboration in his Mikrokosmos.

[6] Lotze, Rudolph Herman, Metaphysik (Oxford, 1884, trans. by B. Bosenquet), par. 69

only derived from his thought but from his effect on numerous students who in turn became teachers across the country, principally in Methodist colleges and universities. He exercised a liberalizing influence in the church and, as Schneider has pointed out, along with McCosh of Princeton, refused to take the conventional attitude in apologetics, but expounded "metaphysical truth with clear and secular arguments, making theological considerations a decidedly secondary matter."[7]

Bowne called his independent form of Lotzean idealism by such titles as "Kantianized Berkeleianism," "transcendental empiricism," and "personalism." The latter designation, given to Bowne's thought by William James, was accepted by him and used as a title for the book which he published in 1908.[8] Bowne developed the theistic implications of Lotze's system and reconstructed the Kantian doctrine of categories.

> "Arguing on the basis of the principle of sufficient reason, he concluded that persons can be caused only by persons and that the ultimate cause or creator must be 'at least personal.'"[9]

Bowne's Personalism (1908) gave a systematic formulation to a distinct school of idealistic philosophy and theology, the recent champions of which have included such names as G. A. Coe, A. C. Knudson, R. T. Flewelling, and E. S. Brightman.[10] The school has tended to defend personalism

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[7] Schneider, H. W., A History of American Philosophy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946), p. 250

[8] Bowne, B. P., Personalism (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1908)

[9] Schneider, op. cit., p. 467

[10] Ibid., p. 469

as a philosophical system, not so much as Bowne did on the basis of conventional cosmology, but more as a philosophy of values. For this school the finite self or empirical datum is conceived as conscious activity, an activity most clearly present and perceived in acts of valuation. Objective mind, if existing, is discovered in norms by which selves govern themselves. The Personalists have developed Bowne's monadology, teleology, and ethics without committing themselves to the cosmological arguments for theism on which his earliest works were based. They rest their case, as Leighton puts it, on the doctrine that the "only world view in which values and meanings can have a permanently real status is one for which minds, personalities, and their values are supreme."[11] This, certainly, is the position of Brightman.

Brightman (1884-1953) was influenced in his early career by Royce and Hegel. Brightman has noted the importance of Hegel for one stage in the development of his thought. It was occasioned as he moved from "emphasis on the rationalistic and a priori factors in religious knowledge to emphasis on the empirical." Hegel is described as "the empiricist of consciousness," and from Hegel's declaration that the,

> "true is the whole it is plain that he is thus the most thorough empiricist...Hegel has led me to see that true rationalism is simply the principle of confronting every part of experience with our view of the whole, while true

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[11] Leighton, J. A. "The Principle of Individuality and Value" in Contemporary Idealism in America (Ed. by Clifford Barrett, N.Y. 1932), p. 160

> empiricism is the principle of accepting only that view of the whole which is honestly built up by observation of the acceptable parts of experience."[12]

It should be noted, however, that however much Brightman claims to have been influenced by Hegel, he never lost his subjectivistic emphasis; thus his continuing indebtedness is to Bowne.

Brightman did his undergraduate work at Brown University and received his degree in 1906. Continuing his studies he received his M.A. in 1908, his S.T.B. at Boston University in 1910, and his Ph.D. in 1912. While doing his doctorate work he studied at the University in Marburg, Germany. Upon his return to the United States, he taught philosophy and psychology at Nebraska Wesleyan University for three years, then at Wesleyan University in Connecticut until he went to Boston University in 1919. He was to remain at Boston until his death in 1953. His work at Boston University was chiefly with graduate students. His thought reached out across the nation not alone because he was active in almost every national association which concerned itself with philosophy or related subjects, but because his students went out from Boston to teach in colleges across the land. In this, too, he resembles his teacher, Bowne. Any rapid survey of the organizations to which he belonged, of the growth in the faculty in his department and the number of students who studied under him, of the number of articles and books that flowed

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[12] "From Rationalism to Empiricism" in the series "How My Mind Has Changed in This Decade," THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY, LVI: 9, March 1, 1939, pp. 276-277

from his pen, indicates an incredible energy and drive.

His final work,[13] an attempt to state a constructive metaphysics, represents not only the summation of his thought, but covers most of the ground traversed in his previous writing. The major questions of interest to this inquiry are treated sytematically here. His key concepts and special terminology achieve their final formulation. Careful students of Brightman's thought may detect differences which make it possible to speak of an earlier or later period in his thought. It has seemed to the present writer that his position has not so much altered as emerged, receiving gradually a fuller body and an increasingly specialized terminology for its expression. The analysis undertaken here is based primarily on the final work, Person and Reality, and on a portion of his earlier book, The Philosophy of Religion, in which he gives specific attention to the problem of immortality. The chief problems we will encounter are those relating to personality and values, for Brightman's is a metaphysics of values in which the person is the center or, as he says, the category of categories. Before attempting the analysis of Brightman's concepts of person and value, it will be helpful to analyze the context in which these terms are meaningful. This context is best seen by the analysis of two terms, "shining present" and "illuminating absent," which he keeps in polarity and uses repeatedly

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[13] Brightman, E. S., Person and Reality (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1958)

throughout the entire work. While these terms are not analogous to the terms, "time" and "eternity," we shall see that they are critical for an understanding of how time and eternity are to be related.

THE SHINING PRESENT AND ILLUMINATING ABSENT

Brightman contends that each metaphysician must begin with his own present personal experience, his Now, which is his source of evidence, his "this," "mine," and "immediacy of feeling" to use Bradley's words.[14] This immediacy has, by the time a metaphysician begins to scrutinize it, already accumulated a great deal: memory, perception, purpose, theorizing, doubting, believing, criticizing, references to a beyond, duration, spatial relations, temporal passage. In short, the situation experienced, or the shining present, carries a considerable baggage and contains "all presently-observable consciousness--all sensations, images, reasoning, loves, hates, fears, and hopes of Now, all conations, strivings and efforts, desires, aversions."[15]

There is, however, beyond this shining present a larger reference which Brightman sometimes calls the "illuminating absent," and at other times the "situation-believed in." The shining present does not include the absent that illuminates it, and indeed cannot. Memory does not reinstate

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[14] Bradley, F. H., Appearance and Reality (1893), p. 223

[15] Brightman, op. cit., p. 36 See also Brightman, The Problem of God (New York: Abingdon Press, 1930), p. 154f; also Brightman, The Philosophy of Religion (New York: Prentice Hall, 1945), p. 357f. In Brightman's thought "shining present," "situation-experienced," and "datum-self" are identical.

the actual past; perception does not bring the reality perceived into one's mind, nor bring those great external realities of nature, history or God into the limits of the present, though the present requires them to be understood. My present, says Brightman, involves my past--my parents, education, country, friends, the world of nature. To believe in myself, then, is to believe in "the absent" or that which is beyond myself. Experiences of time and space lead me to acknowledge time and space systems not present to immediate experience and enlarge the "Now" to the "Then" of past and future, the "Here" to the "Theres" we know or imagine. The present contains continual references to the absent as,

> "all knowledge and all error are present experiences referring to a supposed past or a supposed future or a supposed other of some sort. Belief in the absent is normally accepted as true, or probably true, insofar as it illuminates the present."[16]

Just as the absent illuminates, the present reflects; they act and react, communicate and interact. If much of the absent is dark and unknown, we need not react with fear when there is much ground for hope in further exploration.[17]

The Mutual Dependence of Present and Absent

The present and absent require each other. Brightman rejects the Positivist position which, he says, asserts the present and denies the

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[16] Brightman, E. S., Person and Reality, p. 37

[17] Ibid., p. 38 Brightman accuses Heidegger of reacting with Angst to the unknown in the absent, when what is called for is "further exploration."

absent. To say "I" without a corresponding "you," or to say "we" without a "world," renounces reason and denatures experience. Though no one has ever seriously believed in such an extreme position, "Positivists, Phenomenalists, psychophysical Parallelists, and Agnostics have driven their horses close to the brink of the abyss of nihilism."[18] He also rejects any extreme metaphysical pluralism which would assert that reality is made up of ultimately different, independent, and self-sufficient entities. He would begin with the facts, for to his thinking there is nothing else with which to begin. This means begin with experience, with the present in its interaction with the absent. The absent must cohere with the present, not as a static whole (Parmenides), nor as fluid replica of it (Heraclitus), but as its "coherent and dynamic interpretation and goal (as an Aristotle, a Hegel, or a Lotze might think)."[19] Many of the problems of traditional philosophy have come from a false emphasis of either the present or the absent: a priority given to the absent ending in giving a priori status to truth from which facts are deduced regardless of experience; a priority given to the present leading to positivism and solipsism. Both extremes are to be avoided, just as both aspects are recognized.

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

The Shining Present Too Narrowly or Broadly Defined

The shining present can be conceived in too narrow terms, as (1) mere sensation, (2) by thinking of it in terms of ordinary language, or (3) by reducing it to space-time processes. Concerning its reduction to sensation alone, Brightman affirms that it is empirically false to assume that sensation has ever been known to occur by itself or apart from hope or fear or despair or memory or positive beliefs. "If philosophy is in search of the whole truth, no philosophy can be based on sensation alone."[20] Nor can the present be understood by recourse to analysis of language.

> "The predilection for seeking the key to all philosophy in the forms and rules of grammar is found germinally in Aristotle's use of substantives, adjectives, verbs, and prepositions as the source of insight into substances, attributes, actions and relations."[21]

Language is an important tool of experience and should be used carefully, with the reservation that experience of referents and rational beliefs about them are more fundamental to philosophy than the current preoccupation with words. Finally, reduction of the shining present to space-time processes is erroneous because many experiences occur, and most value judgments are made, without reference to space. Brightman holds that it is unempirical to say that all experience is spatial in the same sense that it is temporal.

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[20] Ibid., p. 40

[21] Ibid.

On the other hand, the shining present can be seen in too broad terms, as in "epistemic monism" which makes the knower and known identical in the knowing process. For monism, God, nature, or other mind is immediately present and unites the subject and his object. But, says Brightman, the object known and the knower are never epistemically identical. Epistemic dualism is more desirable than monism, for the latter cannot account for error. The dualism, or polarity, of the shining present and the illuminating absent not only accounts for error, but avoids the pitfall of monism which "sweeps everything into its net" and ends in a vast solipsism. The shining present can also be enlarged beyond the boundaries Brightman would set, by any view of cause and effect which assumes that the esse of what is present is identical with its causa. The familiar confusion at this point of "mind and brain" is a standard example.[22] Some thinkers say that "mind is brain because brain causes mind." Yet Brightman comments that in his experience a human being never finds "any brain in his mind." Whatever the shining present is, it is not to be identified with its cause, be this the whole universe, God, or the brain.

The Shining Present and Illuminating Absent Defined

It is one thing to say what the shining present is not, and another to say what it is. If Brightman is better at the former than the latter,

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[22] Brightman, The Philosophy of Religion, p. 359f.

it may be because he is by nature polemical, and at every turn is careful to let it be known just what he is rejecting and to whom his thought is in opposition. He defines the shining present as a complex unity of consciousness of which two propositions hold true.

> "(1) This complex unity of consciousness is not directly accessible to any other consciousness as it is initself (so it may be called a datum-self).
> (2) This present unity or shining present has a unique relation to past experiences which it remembers (by a series of memory-linkages), and to future experiences which it anticipates."[23]

Any given shining present is then a datum-self, a first-person consciousness, and by consciousness Brightman means any sort of experience: awareness, feeling, striving, sensing, memory, reasoning. On the other hand, any situation (such as one's own past, or the interior of the sun, or society) which is not "my" consciousness--is "absent."[24] The absent may be remembered, or imagined or "known"; any reference to it in the present is taken to be an illumination by the absent of the shining present. Brightman cites with approval the comment by C. S. Peirce that "There is only one state of mind from which you can set out, namely, the very state of mind in which you find yourself at the time you do

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[23] _____, Person and Reality, p. 44

[24] Ibid.

set out."[25]

In other words, Brightman seems to be saying that a person is needed, as is a world--and time. Time is given meaning in the participation of a person or persons in the manifold and full experience of his world. Consciousness, empirically understood, like the term "experience" is an inclusive category containing in its scope everything that is or can be known. But this everything has to be separated into the immediately relevant and the vast other that is available or conceivable. There is constant change and infinite variety in the way the other impinges upon and interacts with individual personal conscious experience.

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[25] Ibid. Brightman classifies, then rejects or gives approval to, various philosophies in summary fashion on the basis of the way they view the relation of the shining present and the illuminating absent. Positivism reduces the relevant shining present to sense data and denies or ignores knowledge of the illuminating absent. Phenomenology is aware of the absent but, in a vigorous discipline, confines itself to the analysis of the structures or "forms" of the present. It is preferable to positivism for it is more inclusive and less dogmatic. Radical empiricism and idealism exemplify interest in the present but include in it whatever physicists find it useful to postulate or mystics find themselves moved to believe. They then identify experience and nature or experience and God, and elaborate highly incoherent competing systems. They are empirical, it is true, because "everyone's experience certainly includes contradictory and incoherent judgments." Brightman looks more favorable on James' empiricism and Royce's idealism, for they (1) admit in experience only what is actually in experience, (2) discover and acknowledge all that is actually in experience, (3) describe the real exclusively interms of what is actual or possible experience of some self at some time. Radical empiricism and idealism are preferable to positivism or phenomenology.

TIME

Time and Space

It is instructive that Brightman discusses time in a chapter by itself, and puts space and motion together for analysis in the following chapter. Time, he says, has a more pervasive and fundamental meaning than these other categories. The experience of time passing can be completely analyzed without any reference to the concommitant spatial experiences of bodily behavior or physical surroundings. It makes no difference where one thinks, as long as he can think. Thinking implies time. Space is not necessary to all possible experience, but time is.

> "Some awareness of time shines always in the present--some sense of enduring, some reminiscence, some yearning or waiting for a future, if the future be only sleep or death. Clock time, almanac time, one's age, or one's appointments may be forgotten, but it is impossible for a present to shine at all without some sense of present-past-future within it and beyond it."[26]

Temporal experience is not spatial, though spatial experience is in time. The geometrician sees his proofs in a time-span rather than in a timeless instant, for even an intuition takes time.

The interrelation of time and space is most clearly understood in the experience of motion which "weds time and space" in a "spatio-temporal synthesis which, like all genuine Hegelian syntheses, adds

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[26] Brightman, Person and Reality, p. 114

something new to the thesis and antithesis."[27] Motion does not mean that spaces continue to exist at different times, nor, on the other hand, that different spaces exist at the same time. Rather, a new property arises with an experienced correlation between changes of location in space and changes in the successive presents of experienced time. Motion, then, combines while it adds to, time and space. The modern ideal of abstract physics and mathematics of finding one equation which would cover all motions of all masses at all times may cause one to overlook the real function of theory which is to "explain facts." Theory has "no claim to truth if it cannot be tested by facts."[28]

Time and Experience of Change

Time, the most pervasive category, is indissolubly involved in present experience. By time, Brightman says he means duration, "not conceptual, antifactual clock time or measuring time." Were there any being independent of experience, it would endure or not endure and, if it did not endure, it would not be; if it did endure, it would be temporal. Thus time is "empirically universal." Experience is always a time-span and time is always an aspect of experience.[29] As experienced it is private, though it is believed to be public. A clear conception

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[27] Ibid., p. 115

[28] Ibid., p. 116 "The facts of experience must be the ultimate validation of every theory about time-space-motion, as of every belief or hypothesis on any conceivable subject." (underlines mine)

[29] Brightman says that Kant may have had this in mind when he spoke of time as "the form of the inner sense." Brightman believes that Kant stated it more clearly when he held that the moral law requires an immortal life for its fulfillment. "Any shining present shines on for a time--and times." Ibid.

of time as a subjective-objective category is needed to make sense of physical time, astronomical time, imaginary, fictional and historical times, though these may be only remotely connected with the fundamental experience of duration.

What can be made of those, the poets and mystics for instance, who deny the universality of time? Brightman admits grounds on which space can be denied as a category of all being. He is more hesitant about time. The mystics report experiences "beyond space and time." Yet the mystic enters samadhi "at a time and returns from samadhi at a later time."[30] His experience might be spaceless in its content and timeless in reference to biological or astronomical time. Yet the mystic's experience can be entirely beyond time only by being so negative as to deny all enduring meaning and content. Mystical experience, then, is a real duration which is indifferent to all ordinary time measurements. However ineffable it may be, the fact that the experience begins in time, endures, is remembered, and described would indicate that it is not without duration. Brightman takes his stand: to deny time is to deny experience; time is a category of all shining presents. Time is also a category of all illuminating absents. It is possible to postulate an absolutely timeless absent, but it would lack the property of illumination and therefore could not be coherent with, or relevant to, the shining present. It would be, at best, a useless hypothesis, explaining

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[30] Ibid., p. 117

neither time nor change, illuminating nothing.

> "It is, of course, possible to entertain the proposition: There is being that does not in any sense endure, has no temporal characteristics, and therefore is in no sense relevant to time, or time to it. Contrary to those who identify time with change, our point of view identifies it with real duration. Where there no change, time could not be measured. But if any being endured, even changelessly, it would exemplify the category of time."[31]

But just what is objective time? Must it be presupposed before change is conceivable or possible? To say that time is objective means that there is an order of time in the universe beyond every human experience. Such a position, maintained by some realists, invites serious difficulty, for it makes time independent of all possible experience and thus unverifiable, and it posits as well a time that stands in no coherent relation to actual time experience. If there is a "pure time" it is a powerless abstraction from personal experience incapable of connecting itself in any intelligible way or interaction effectively with experience. To be productive, it must be an active and integral part of some agency and thus not "pure."

> "Even Kant, who denied time to 'things in themselves' found time necessary in his schematism for all knowledge and needed endless time for obedience to moral law. And Santayana, with his Platonism and his essences, had to say, 'belief in time is, I think, the deepest belief we have.' Andrew Seth, in his Hegelianism and Personality, declared that 'if we give up time, we move out of reality altogether.' And Whitehead, who found time in the consequent nature of God, would agree. Time, once more, is a category for all that there is."[32]

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[31] Ibid., p. 118

[32] Ibid., p. 119

The crux of the discussion of time is, for Brightman, seen in its relation to the shining present and the illuminating absent. Wherever there is shining present there is time, and, more important, there are persons who experience a real present. What is rejected here is any view in which an "absent" reality renders "actual" reality illusory. Mathematical and astrophysical science may tempt men to regard time as a "fourth dimension of space," an item in an equation relating the time and space dimensions. But if time is thus identified with the mathematical measurement of it, what Brightman means by time, duration or "passage," vanishes or becomes a myth. The empiricist, however, cannot identify the measurement with the reality measured. "Natural events are not <u>really</u> geometry and arithmetic any more than present experience is really geometry and arithmetic."[33]

<u>Time and Order</u>

What has been said might suggest that the empiricist is not concerned with the "order" in time. This is not the case, however, and when one affirms that time is experience of duration, its order can be seen in its form of past-present-future as unique order--irreversible, a union of change and permanence, and related to purpose. By unique

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[33] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 120 Brightman contrasts his view with that of Donald C. Williams ("The Myth of Passage" in <u>Journal of Philosophy</u> XLVIII (1951), pp. 451-472) who writes "Time 'flows' only in the sense in which a line flows or a landscape 'recedes into the West.'" Brightman comments that one could not ask for a more decisive geometrizing or spatializing of time.

order is meant that quality so difficult to express, which is sometimes suggested, though inadequately, by a line. It is chronological order rather than logical order and has no special value associated with it; neither the best nor the worst normally comes first or last in the historical time series.[34] Time's order is irreversible in the simple empirical sense that what is past never can be present again and cannot be altered. The future likewise is potential until it occurs. It is fantasy pure and simple to assume that the whole time series is laid out eternally in some completed series so that all presents, pasts, and futures, are contemporary with every present. Brightman dismisses any view which sees the future as already formed (as for instance in Aquinas' view of God's foreknowledge) with the statement that such a view destroys freedom and makes vain all attempts to alter the future.

The experience of time is a union of permanence and change. Though time may usually be conceived as change, yet change could not be known nor occur were not there something that abided--in this case, the unity of self consciousness. Were nothing permanent, there could be no logic, law, measurement, memory or purpose. "Experience requires us to acknowledge both permanence and change as inherent in all knowledge and being."[35]

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[34] Brightman thinks that Kant had the uniqueness of time in mind when he wrote that "time is in itself a series--and is the formal condition of all series." (Critique of Pure Reason, A411, B438)

[35] Ibid., p. 123

Time and Purpose

The experience of time is related to, and involved in, the experience of purpose. Purpose is close to the essence of selfhood and is to be found in some degree in every shining present. The word "end" can refer to time or telos and can be used synonymously with purpose. The "end" as goal may be present and guide toward the future as "end" in time. Yet the highest ends cannot have stopping places. If love is a moral end, there is no "time" to cease loving.

> "Kant's argument for immortality, defective as it may be, rests on the truth of the endlessness of moral obligation. If coherence is a logical end, that end is also endless; for completed coherence cannot be achieved in time with the incessant onrush of new experiences."[36]

From the foregoing it would seem that purposes might be beyond time, and transcend time (or perhaps be eternal?). Purposes can be related to time in three ways: they may be completely achieved in a finite stretch of time; they may be inexhaustible in any time; they may be completely timeless without reference to, or relevance for, time as experienced. In the last sense, purpose is philosophically unimportant, literally meaningless, and by definition can have no basis in the shining present. For the second relation--that a purpose may never be fulfilled in any given time--we are not to suppose that it is thereby independent of time. Rather, it is related to all time, perennially relevant and temporal. There are then two admissible types of purpose: those like

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[36] Ibid., p. 124

the architect's sketch for the house which will be finished, and those like the ideal of rationality which must forever be sought. Both types can be found in the shining present and that present will not be found ever to be devoid of purpose.

Immanence and Transcendence

Brightman's discussion of immanence and transcendence in relation to time affirms three levels of transcendence. The first is the transcendence of the self over the split second of immediate experience, the kind of experience that gathers up the striking of the clock into a unit of experience and knows that it is now three or four o'clock. The second kind of transcendence is that longer reach ofmemory and anticipation into past and future. The shining presents of the past are no longer real in themselves but have significance as they bear on the present. These two forms of transcendence are within the individual in his personal experience.

The third kind of transcendence Brightman acknowledges is that of the illuminating absent, one which is not in any sense my shining present, although related to it as its cause and itself an experience of time spans. What is it like? It includes all shining presents, and is involved in all experience. It must explain the present, and it must, as Hegel and Whitehead have declared, be in process. It is that most generalized personal process which experience can find or suppose to exist, having many names and conceived in many ways.

Accurate measurement of historical or physical time is secured by reference to a temporal-spatial order of motion commonly called "nature." For the idealist, nature may be seen as itself a superhuman shining present which illuminates all human or subhuman shining presents. On the other hand, nature may seem an unconscious and impersonal dark source of the present if one is a materialist, naturalist or realist. Whatever view others might take, Brightman affirms that time's order is both immanent and transcendent, a distinction, we should note, which is not between time and eternity or even between time and that which transcends time. It is a distinction between the limited experience of the individual with his relatively small transcendence over the moment and the larger nature system which finally conceived is also temporal. The difference would seem to be one of degree more than of kind. The problem will have to be broached again in a discussion of the nature of God.

ETERNALISM AND TEMPORALISM

Thus far time has been taken to be the most pervasive category of experience, making it necessary to assume that it is the most pervasive category of every absent which is beyond our experience. This would be true of every being that can be "inferred from, or intuited by, or in any wise related to, our experience. What is not thus related to us is no theme for philosophers, but only for myth-makers; yet, not even

myth escapes some rootage in experience."[37] This metaphysical temporalism implies time-experience not only for the self but for all illuminating absents. Brightman acknowledges that his view must take account of the opposing view which he calls "eternalism" which draws all time from eternity, so that time is "a moving image of eternity."[38] The main problem at this point Brightman frames in a series of questions: Is time ultimate Is there literally a timeless reality--an eternal on which time depends? Is the eternal prior to, and more real than, anything temporal? Is everything temporal transient while only the eternal endures? Can the eternal endure without duration? Are there two independent orders, one temporal and the other eternal, in conflict with each other? Will there ever be a time when "time shall be no more?" The way the questions are asked may well suggest the answer Brightman is prepared to give them.

The Meaning of Eternal

The word "eternal" is used variously to refer to orders of being and to the prospect of continued existence. These different views need

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[37] Ibid., p. 130

[38] Brightman calls the roll of the significant figures who have treated the problem of time and eternity. "Parmenides, Heraclitus, Plato ("time a moving image of eternity"), Aristotle, Plotinus, Augustine ("if you do not ask me, I know"), Shankara (maya and Brahman), John Calvin (predestination), Berkeley ("lost and embrangled in inextricable difficulties"), Kant (antinomies), Hegel ("Idea is process"), S. Alexander (restlessness of Space-Time), H. Bergson (élan vital and creative evolution), Kierkegaard ("infinite qualitative difference between time and eternity"), Bradley (relational thinking), Bowne (time phenomenal only), J. Royce (all-inclusive time-span), Perry (neutral entities), Whitehead (temporalism with eternal objects), Newton (absolute time), and Einstein (relative time)." Ibid., pp. 130-131

to be distinguished.

(1) "Eternal" is used among religious believers to refer to life after death, an eternal life in an order different from the natural world. While different from the present world, conscious experience continues and time persists as real duration even though physical or biological measure of time may be absent.

(2) "Eternal" may be used also as a value term, as it appears in the Gospel of John, denoting a life devoted to imperishable value. The eternity here is the imperishability of the good rather than the survival of the person.

(3) "Eternity" may also be used to connote the more transcendent and unempirical order of being belonging to God alone. Brightman notes the apparent kinship between religious experience and the structure of logical thought.

> "As the mystical moment transports one from 'this' world to the 'other,' so logical reasoning transports the mind from dependence on the particular moments of experience to a grasp of the unchanging universal and its eternally necessary implications."[39]

Brightman does not question that these levels of experience exist. The visible and invisible, the natural and supernatural, sense and reason, are divergent aspects of "empirical fact." But he questions whether

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[39] Ibid., p. 131 In The Philosophy of Religion, Brightman says, "We may define the eternal as what is true at all times. As regards purpose, the eternal is what is purposed at all times." p. 385

it is possible to say with Kierkegaard that there is an "absolute qualitative difference" between the levels. Brightman thinks that there is an underlying and meaningful connection between them--both empirical and rational. If there are two worlds, one discoverable in experience and the other revealed only in special experience standing in no coherent relation to the rest of the shining present, experience is bifurcated, the aim of philosophy is foiled and reliance on coherent reason must be abandoned. If the two realms remain wholly apart,

> "life is not merely more than logic, as Lotze and Bowne held; life is free from rational guidance or restraint and from all rational meaning. Mystical contemplation and logical analysis become irrelevant to the interpretation of experience."[40]

But to make such a separation is to put apart what God has joined together! Both rational and empirical analysis will have not only their separations but synoptic unions as well.

Brightman affirms that <u>the eternal must be a function of time rather than time a function of eternity</u>. Time is not just the measure of motion or the fact of change but rather the total real duration of personal experience in the shining present.

> "Hence the absent being which this present faces, on which it depends, and with which it interacts, must be also a real duration. For how can the non-temporal, the non-enduring, produce the temporal without itself being or becoming temporal at the very moment time began? Does the supposedly unchanging not change the moment it produces time?"[41]

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[40] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 132 In <u>The Philosophy of Religion</u>, Brightman states this in the sharpest possible terms. "To think of the eternal as utterly timeless in all respects and as wholly other than temporal process is to think of it in a way that may be edifying, but it is useless for the understanding of religious or of any other experience." p. 386

[41] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 132-133

An Eternal Temporalism

The idea of a creation ex nihilo cannot be conceived. Ex nihilo - nihil fit: out of nothing, nothing is made.[42] If reason is trustworthy at all, this reasoning is necessary. An unbegun, non-temporal eternity initiating a temporal series and still remaining non-temporal is unthinkable. If the experient will begin with the experience of time and reason, two things follow: He will infer that time is unbegun and unending, since a real beginning would mean an effect without a cause, and a real end would mean a cause without an effect; he will also infer that there are truths that are true at all times. Brightman maintains that the eternal is then to be conceived not as non-temporal but as "omnitemporal." The shining present points to and involves an illuminating absent that is unbegun and unending duration, and in which may be discovered truths that are true at all times."[43]

Personalism's Virtue Over Against Naturalism and Eternalism

Brightman maintains that it follows from the assumption that time is the most pervasive category of experience and that absent being is itself temporal, that "a true metaphysics must be both a temporalism and a personalism." It is possible to posit an impersonal temporal

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[42] Ibid., p. 133 Brightman traces this argument to Melissus of Samos, who speaks of "What was ever, and ever shall be" - the eternal - "...For if it had come into being, it needs must have been nothing before it came into being. Now if it were nothing, in no wise could anything have arisen out of nothing." (Burnet, J., Early Greek Philosophy (London: A. & C. Black, Ltd., 1920), p. 322 See also Freeman, K., The Pre-Socratic Philosophers (Oxford: Basil Blackwell & Mott, Ltd., 1946), pp. 164-166

[43] Ibid.

process which finds time, space and motion in experience. Naturalism may espouse temporalism while rejecting personalism, in which case time experience is reduced to abstract succession in which novelties appear, and the illuminating absent is understood as some sort of unconscious, impersonal process in which consciousness and its experienced time emerge. Where the "eternalist eliminates the constitutive nature of time; the naturalist takes time seriously but makes personal experience a by-product of it."[44] Naturalism seeks to retain only what is immediately useful for the physical sciences (dependable sequences or succession) but errs in that it rejects what is essential both to subjective and objective being, namely, the real duration of personal experience. The eternalist "must show how the non-temporal can produce the enduring, unified shining present if there is nothing enduring in the merely successive absent."[45]

Personalism has the virtues of holding the valid truths of both naturalism and eternalism without slipping into the pitfalls they contain. If nature cannot account for consciousness or for experienced time, and if impersonal eternity cannot account for real process and evolution, the postulate of an ever-enduring personality as the objective real accounts for both.[46] Personalism supplies such a postulate and sees the universe as a society of persons derived from the unity of an ever-enduring source of all other duration, the unbegun and unending person called God.

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[44] Ibid., p.134

[45] Ibid., pp. 134-135

[46] Ibid., p. 136

The Narrow View of Naturalism

It should be noted that the naturalism Brightman finds wanting is defined in very narrow terms indeed. One is hard put to find a modern naturalist who fits the picture he paints. As Brightman pictures naturalism and realism, theirs is a view of process or evolution, or some fort of temporal succession, without a unifying personal center of meaning. It is a view of time without the experienced property of a time-span--time without the experience of memory, yet involving reference to a past; without experienced purpose or expectation but involving a future.

> "Such a 'naturalistic' or 'rationalistic' or 'impersonal' view of time is so barren of the essential ingredients of time experience as to be utterly inadequate as a metaphysical hypothesis. It is but the barren, abstract ghost of real time."[47]

Brightman then accuses the naturalist and realist of a concern for objective time from which it cannot get to the personal experience of conscious entities with memories and purposes without some sort of incoherent miracle.[48] He therefore expects naturalism to leave the transition unexplained or ignored. It is easy to show that one's opponent cannot stand if one has "defined" him as having no legs.

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[47] Ibid., p. 135

[48] Brightman's argument here is suggestive of that of Hocking which we examined in Chapter 3, in which Hocking maintains that there are forms of materialism, naturalism, realism, and technical behaviorism which approach the facts of the mind from the side of the nervous system and which have no significant place for consciousness, which indeed on their premises "ought not to be there." Hocking, Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience, p. 24ff.

THE REALM OF PERSONS

For Brightman it is in the experience of the person that logical norms and reason are discovered.[49] Each of the categories--time, space, cause, substance--is to be found in the shining present. The "realm of essence" is a rarified abstraction from the concrete process of personal experience: The realm of nature takes on significance only as it illuminates problems which the reasoning person finds in his shining present.

The Person in Psychology and Philosophy

Brightman begins his analysis of the person by noting the treatment given the self in modern psychology and the limited scope of that science in relation to empirical philosophy. Both philosophical idealism and psychology have identical subject matter, namely, the mind, though their method is distinct. The psychologist, says Brightman (in a statement of limitation which many psychologists would find restricting), is "primarily concerned with the observation and causal explanation of the experience of finite selves."[50] His chief interest is in methods of experimentation and the data which these methods gather. The philosopher, on the other hand, has greater interest in the presuppositions and

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[49] The chapter in Person and Reality dealing with "The realm of persons" is actually a compilation of articles by Brightman appearing through the years in various journals. The editor, P. Bertocci, has spliced them together with some editing, following an outline which Brightman had drafter for the chapter. These articles will not be cited in references to the passages of the book.

[50] Ibid., pp. 256-257

implications of the experimental methods than in the method itself. The philosopher is further interested in relating the results of psychological science to ideal values, and in relating that particular science to the physical sciences. Thus psychology becomes a science among several sciences, and science is, "for cultivated people other than scientific specialists, a relatively small part of civilized living and that part chiefly instrumental."[51] In the life of most human beings music, art, social organization, recreation, literature, and religion are more significant than science. Philosophy seeks to interpret them all. What the philosopher asks of the psychologist is the results of his study, his data, without having to use them within the latter's restricted frame of reference. The philosopher remembers that the psychologist tends, in the interest of science, to become ever more objective, whereas the philosopher will treat the person as an experiencing subject.

Personality (person, personality, and self are interchangeable), says Brightman, must be presupposed in every experiment. Here "experiment" suggests the pursuit of knowledge or the foundations which must be present in any attempt to gain truth. Needed for the experiment are: an experimenter or unitary self, observable data of consciousness, purpose, recognition of the validity of reason, memory, time, and the acknowledgement of an objective world and of society. With such an a priori framework, and only with all its elemen s intact, can the empirical experimenter analyze the structure of personal experience. In so doing he

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[51] Ibid., p. 257

will find, like Bowne, that the person is the category of categories.

The Person Defined

The self is first seen as a time-transcending unity of personal experience implying real duration.[52] The self is not spatial in the same sense that it is temporal, for as we have noted, there are aspects of selfhood which might conceivably exist if space were abolished. Selves have sensation, a "non-logical given" which, while it varies between individuals, is still a fundamental function of every human experience and provides the point of interaction between the self and the wider realm of nature. The self experiences feeling, liking or disliking, approval or disapproval, satisfactions or dissatisfactions, which may be subjective or objective, "self-centered" or "other-centered." Will, too, is a function of every self and is interpreted as effort or choice. Brightman rejects those religions which view will as selfish desire and a source of unhappiness or evil. The will may be good or evil, but, when evil, the evil is derived not from the will but the direction of

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[52] Ibid., p. 261 Brightman says that Whitehead's "actual occasion" or Royce's "time-span" or what others have called the "specious present" or "datum self," is what he means by time-transcending unity of personal experience.

the will.[53] Freedom of will does not mean complete self-determination without a relation to past experience, present powers or capacities, or limitations of environment. It means the power to choose from among the given possibilities. With these elements gathered into one definition, Brightman says that a person is,

> "...a complex but self-identifying, active, selective, feeling, sensing, developing experience, which remembers its past (in part), plans its future, interacts with its subconscious processes, its bodily organism, and its natural and social environment, and is able to judge and guide itself and its objects by rational and ideal standards."[54]

The Mind and the Body

Brightman deals in summary fashion with the question of whether sensations are physiological or, put another way, whether the body and consciousness are one. Are sensations physiological events in the brain? Are sensations mental? Is the body the mind? To identify them is to confuse cause and effect.

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[53] "Personalism challenges the belief of some religions that will is always selfish desire and is always a source of unhappiness and evil. Will may be self-centered or community-centered; it may be directed toward man alone, or toward God; it may be good or evil. When it is evil, the evil derives not from the bare fact that it is will, but from the intent and direction of the will. Will is the rudder of personality, or rather the pilot who directs the rudder. Whether the pilot steers toward the rocks or toward the harbor, he is still the pilot." (Ibid., p. 264) It is questionable whether the problem yields to this simple a solution. To say that evil is a direction taken by the will or an object chosen by the will does not place the locus of evil outside the will. The will is not a substance or entity entirely separate from its actions or choices. The "will" and "the direction of the will" are not discontinuous.

[54] Ibid., p. 268 The argument appears to be circular here. A person is a "developing experience," and experience "presupposes a person."

> "In order to avoid the confusion which ensues when cause and effect are identified, all things melt into one (as in certain kinds of absolute idealism and pragmatism), we have only to consult experience and reason. If we take our personality to be just what we experience it to be, we can identify our personality with our consciousness and also reasonably infer the interaction of personality with its surrounding world of body and nature and God, as well as their interdependence."[55]

Brightman's way of treating the mind/body problem goes beyond the psychophysical relationship in the particular person to a metaphysical assumption about God and matter in the universe akin to Hocking's "other mind" theory.

For Brightman, nature is cosmic Mind. Nature, in personalism, is the "energizing of the cosmic Experient."[56] Brightman bases his case for this assertion on four arguments: First, all the evidence for nature is personal consciousness; second, we believe in the objectivity of nature primarily on the ground that it resists yet responds to our will; third, because nature is mathematically constructed; and fourth, because nature expresses purpose. All the evidence of nature points to personal consciousness; nature is in mind, not mind in nature. This is to say that nature is in the Divine Mind, is God's working, his activity, his experience. Nature is part and parcel of God's being, not something external in which he dwells or on which he acts. Thus "nature is conscious, rational purposive will--in short, personal experience."[57] How

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[55] Ibid., p. 270

[56] Ibid. See also The Philosophy of Religion, p. 220ff.

[57] Brightman, Person and Reality, p. 270

is this known to the individual? Brightman notes that the sensations which form the basis of our knowledge are in our own minds. It appears, however, that our minds are in our bodies and thus embedded in nature. Brightman says that this can be dismissed for then the mind,

> "would have to be somewhere in the body, which is obviously not the case. You will find nerves, muscles, gray matter. Nowhere will you find conscious personality. The reason is that mind is not a part of body and is located nowhere in the body."[58]

The mind, however, is dependent on the body and interacts with it, which means for the Personalist "that human personality interacts with, and is dependent on, Divine Personality; for body is in nature and nature is God in action."[59] Thus mind is not in nature, but nature in the Divine Mind is God's way of creating the human mind. Body, or the realm of nature, is itself an expression of the supreme Mind; thus a human body is simply a point of interaction between the supreme Mind and the human mind. In an earlier work Brightman wrote,

> "The unity of human personality must be due to a cause beyond man. The nervous system is the area where that cause operates. If the nervous system is known to be material substance, independent of any mind, then personality is an "epiphenomenon"

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[58] Ibid., p. 271 (underline mine) Brightman's position is weak at this point for two reasons. It suggests that mind would have to be found or located like a liver or hand to be said to be in the body--which is an absurdity. On the other hand to "dislocate" the mind as he does denies the interaction of mind or consciousness with the body and nature which he has already affirmed.

[59] Ibid.

> and its unity is only that of a shadow. But if the nervous system is what idealism and theism take it to be, namely, an expression (or creation) of mind, then the dependence of human personality on its nervous system is an instance of the dependence of human on cosmic mind."[60]

The Self and the Unconscious

Brightman finds it necessary to make a distinction between the person and the unconscious and, as well, between the person and other selves. He hopes that, by separating the personal self and its environment (all physiological beings, all social beings, the inorganic, and the metaphysical realm), it will be increasingly clear what he means by the person. He expects the distinction to provide another support for the conviction that personalism is the only, or at least the most, tenable metaphysics. On the one side he is intent to show that the personal mind is not any part of the body, on the other to demonstrate that it is also "not a part of any other mind." Just as the mind was found to be connected with, and belonging to, the body, so the self is found to be connected to society. It is not a windowless monad incapable of interacting with other selves. Just as blood stays "alive" when in the circulatory system and dries up and ceases to be blood when exposed to the air, so the self stays alive by participating in the flow of time and environment. This self "flows" by interaction with the subconscious and with other selves.

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[60] Brightman, The Philosophy of Religion (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1940), p. 354

Conscious experience allows the reasonable inference that there is an interaction between the unconscious and the conscious. But the unconscious is no more an ingredient of the personal self than is the body upon which the self also depends for the contents of its experience. The subconscious, or unconscious,[61] (for Brightman the terms are interchangeable) is rather like "satellites accompanying the conscious self though acting on the person more intimately than the tidal action of any moon." The unconscious is really conscious because the evidence indicates that it is in itself a process of conscious sensation, desire, or even reasoning. But it is called unconscious because it is not experienced as an "integral part of the conscious datum self. It is, then, the environment of the total person, rather than a part of it."[62] We cannot know as much about the unconscious as we know of biological and physical nature, and what knowledge we possess is purely inferential. Brightman infers from the knowledge available that the subconscious is a kind of second self, a discreet entity, related to the self very much as another self. He believes that the Freudian pleasure-seeking libidinous processes, or the Adlerian desire for superiority, or the Jungian creative urges and archtypes, when considered in their full meaning, lead "us to conclude that the subconscious mind is an intimate

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[61] Brightman prefers to say that the unconscious is "conscious but not self-conscious."

[62] Brightman, Person and Reality, p. 273

partner of our reflective conscious selves, but not more a part of them than are other reflective selves or subpersonal selves."[63]

The Self and Other Selves

In the matter of relating the self to other selves, personalism affirms the existence of selves--subpersonal, personal, and cosmic. There are two problems: How do persons know each other? How is orderly interaction between them possible? A person is an island, is only himself, experiences only himself, remembers only himself, and is, of course, no one else. But the private is also a social person. However, communication and social experience are consistent with self-identity and privacy. Though my experience is mine and belongs to no one else, I find in my experience that which I can explain only as due to the action on me of other persons in my environment. Further analysis will show that this social interaction is not just within individual persons as a part of their experience, but suggestive of a "social mind" or Divine Mind. Within each person are potentialities binding him to universal truth and to wholeness.

> "In every person there is the urge to wholeness which signalizes its kinship with the cosmos. When Alexander found a 'nisus toward totality' in his Space-Time he was acknowledging what is far more concretely present in the life of every person than in abstract Space-Time."[64]

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[63] In his An Introduction to Philosophy, pp. 290-310, Brightman writes, "Hence, self-psychology may well recognize that there are or may be other streams of consciousness than that of the normal self, connected with one human organism."

[64] Ibid., p. 277

Brightman does not want to picture the interaction of persons or that of persons with the cosmic Person in mechanical terms, as a passing of influence or a kind of "metaphysical osmosis" or assimilation. Such views create more problems than they solve. Nor will he admit that in the interaction there is a merging of one's self with that of another, or of knowing directly or immediately the thought processes of another. Each person, while responsive to other selves, and knowing them by analogy as he knows himself, is capable of knowing only his own thoughts and experiences, never those of others. Still, he finds others, whether partially or more fully known, in the environment of his experience. The furthest reach of that experience still finds persons.

> "Selves, subpersonal, personal, and cosmic, are no part of each other, and yet their interaction and their inner experience as purposive unities constitute the structure of the universe."[65]

To understand the meaning of individual personal experience and the interacting of selves, it is necessary to explore the "kind of order which governs and undergirds the realm of persons."[66] What is meant by the affirmation that the "structure of the universe" is constituted by the inner experience and interaction of selves--sub-personal, personal and cosmic? The clue to the order which governs the realm of persons and constitutes the structure of the universe is sought in the examination of what Brightman calls the "realm of values."

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[65] Ibid., p. 279

[66] Ibid.

THE REALM OF VALUES

Brightman traces the modern Positivist position, which neglects values to Bacon's attempt to banish final causes from Nature. Bacon was motivated by his search for uniform order, sequence, and functional relations in nature rather than for purpose, meaning and value. The modern development of an ideal of science free from value is the Baconian legacy, and the Logical Positivists are the most recent heirs. In spite of this history man experiences values. Brightman affirms that Logical Positivists exemplify the rigorous and lofty values of devotion to scientific discipline. Neither they, nor anyone else, can escape values, for nature is a realm of values--indeed would have to be--if man is either a part or a product of it. Society and history are realms of value, and, beyond these realms, values are discovered in the larger metaphysical landscape which Brightman has been calling the illuminating absent.

Nature and Values

If nature is conceived as the object of physicochemical investigation and, if all of it is to be conceived as given in, or implied by, sensory experience, then it is true that nature is value-free. Yet this is too narrow a definition of nature; nature has wider horizons of life, experience, knowledge. The struggle of the human mind in its search for the meaning of life involves much more than the discovery of value-free sensory

information about nature. The life of man is a realm of values, and any decision to restrict knowledge to sensory fact and applied mathematics must, itself, be a value decision. The modern decision to make its major emphasis in the minute analysis of nature has resulted in the amazing development of the physical sciences. This science does not provide an adequate or final principle for interpreting nature, for a full examination of nature will find that values are a significant ground of coherence in nature itself. Investigations will not always agree what those values are. The natural and exact sciences, especially mathematics, exhibit greater agreement among investigators. The movement of thought from value-free nature to the realm of values is a movement from relative agreement to relatively less agreement. For Brightman it is precisely the areas of disagreement that challenge thought, demand investigation, and provoke progress.

What is a value?[67]

> "In the most elementary sense, value means whatever is actually liked, prized, esteemed, desired, approved, or enjoyed by anyone at any time. It is the actual experience of enjoying a desired object or activity."[68]

Yet it is not an adequate definition to identify value as an existing realization of desire, as a kind of raw stuff of experience. There are

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[67] In Brightman's earlier work, The Spiritual Life, he commented that all "striving for values is a form of spirituality." (p. 209) The term "spirit" so prevalent in that book (which was by his own admission a defense of the meaning and value of the term "spiritual") virtually disappears from Brightman's later books and is entirely absent from his final work.

[68] Brightman, Person and Reality, p. 283

levels of value. The value theorist must differentiate the raw values, or value claims, from true values which can be or have been tested. He must make the distinction which Aristotle made between intrinsic values and instrumental values, the intrinsic values being what we commonly call "ends" and the instrumental values, "means."

Metaphysics and Value

The task of the metaphysician of values is to propose a unifying perspective from which may be viewed the entire realm of psychology, sociology, anthropology, ethics, logic, esthetics, and religion, with a special stress on the normative or what ought-to-be. Brightman uses the term "axiology"[69] for this comprehensive study of values and says he means by it the theory of the "ought" in the broadest sense--what ought to be done, believed, appreciated, and worshipped. Axiology is first descriptive; it must also be normative. It fails if it is simply the one or the other. The work of axiology is finally done when values are seen in their total metaphysical perspective, one which relates what ought to be with what is. The realm of values cannot be found in the illuminating absent prior to experiencing concrete values in the shining present. All serious metaphysical thinking must start with the situation experienced in the shining present which, though it is a partial view, is the place of beginning. From one's knowledge of

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[69] This term was popularized in 1909 by Edward von Hartmann's work, Grundriss der Religionsphilosophie.

the present, one begins to have a hypothesis about the whole. "The arrow of intelligibility," says Brightman, "flies back and forth. The metaphysical fact that the whole is prior to all parts does not obscure the epistemic fact that for all human knowledge the parts come first."[70]

The Criterion of Value

Regarding the criterion of value, Brightman is emphatic in distinguishing a fundamental, methodological cleavage between personalism and all modern thought which holds that value is purely emotive. Primary value experience has an objective reference. To the argument that the basis of values is in conscious feelings and therefore not open to public inspection or verification, Brightman replies that all knowledge is rooted in experience and that the rejection of subjective experience would rule out public verification itself. He admits that enjoyed preference is not an adequate basis for a distinction between the feeling that one enjoys something and the knowledge that he ought to enjoy it. Thus some ideal is called for and a criterion must be elaborated, realizing, of course, that the knowledge of the good defined will not be the good. "Knowledge of a moral ideal is no more moral than the definition of a dinner is a square meal."[71]

The norms for value grow out of the interaction of the shining present and the illuminating absent. In this interaction, experience

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[70] Ibid., p. 286

[71] Ibid., p. 288

and reason seek empirical coherence of a field of value which appeals to the whole mind and the total experience.[72] Value experience is temporally prior to the norms; yet the norms are logically prior to their discovery in experience. This logical priority does not imply the objective universals of Plato, which are external to all minds--human and divine. While such a theory makes the universal character of the norms vivid, it also severs them from the concrete experiential base.

> "Norms are not dainty angelic beings; they are workers in the real world, for they represent the vision by which men transform their lives and, when true, are in accordance with the norms in the cosmic Mind for human experience."[73]

The possible relations of value to existence as a whole can be: the revolt of existence against values, the revolt of values against existence, and the cooperation of values with existence. By the revolt of existence against values, Brightman means the denial of a rational principle of value, or when brute force, agressive pride, irrational self-assertion, or group assertion is made the principle of life. On the other hand, when man's rational nature rises in rebellion against things as they are, when the injustices of nature are condemned and the power of unspiritual forces resisted, it is the revolt of value against

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[72] Brightman cites Plato's discussion of the problem of homosexuality in the Phaedrus, p. 256c, in which Plato's final judgment on this phase of Hellenic mores is that it is wrong because "it cannot be done with the whole mind."

[73] Ibid., p. 293

existence. Brightman espouses the third, the organic and cooperative view, relating value and existence as a whole.

> "Those who, like the present writer, hold to this view maintain that mind-values-ideals-norms never would have arisen unless existence were in some sense eternally mind and unless norms were eternally goals of the entire cosmic process... Norms are not confined to the person who acknowledges them or applies them. They are rational, universal, true for all. Indeed there are signs that valid norms are definitions of the objective teleological structure of the universe. They seem to be the controlling goals of all evolutionary struggle. We may think of them as purposes of the Divine Mind, if not of an all, an absolutely omnipotent and all-creating Deity. Whatever their relation to Deity or to any other metaphysical reality, norms are imperatives of reason, and their home is wherever reason dwells, and their work is wherever persons exist."[74]

What is to be concluded, then, is that norms, nature, persons, and the cosmic Person are interrelated. Further, only personalistic idealism can give an adequate account of this interrelation. Personalism holds that "the universe is one order of being--a personal order."[75] Nature, human organisms, human and animal consciousness, are all in some sense manifestations of one interacting order which is personal. Nature has no existence apart from God, for it is in the Divine Personality as part of its conscious experience. The cosmic Mind which is the source both of existence and value, is the God who is the object of moral

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[74] Ibid., p. 294

[75] Ibid., p. 295 Brightman writes at another place, "The solution to the problem at which one arrives does not stand by itself, as some intuitions and axioms seem to do; it is derivative from our Weltanschauung, our total view of the world. Our faith in immortality depends on our philosophy."

inspiration and religious worship. No treatment of the realm of values is complete until some account is taken of the problem of evil. In Brightman's thought, the treatment of evil is inseparable from the problem of God, the discussion of which brings us to the problem of "the Given" and to Brightman's doctrine of a finite God.

A FINITE GOD AND HIS STRUGGLE WITH THE GIVEN

In four successive books, Religious Values (1925), The Problem of God (1930), The Finding of God (1931) and Personality and Religion (1934), Brightman elaborated a concept of a finite, personal God whose finiteness consists in His own internal structure.[76] His view of God is of an eternal unitary, personal consciousness whose creative will is limited by eternal necessities of reason and by eternal experiences of brute fact. The Given is described as "an aspect of God's consciousness which eternally enters into every moment of the divine experience and into everything that is, either as obstacle or as instrument to the will of God."[77]

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[76] Brightman's views here were influenced by W. P. Montague's Belief Unbound (1930) which described God as struggling with recalcitrant factors within himself. See Brightman, The Problem of God, p. 125ff.

[77] _____, Philosophy of Religion, p. 300. Brightman calls attention to R. A. Tsanoff's The Nature of Evil (1931) which, though it does not use the terminology of a finite God, expresses the idea by contrasting the drag (The Given) with the urge (the will) in the cosmic process. Brightman's position in this regard is analyzed with rigor from the Thomist position by James J. McLarney, S.T.L., who argues among other things that Brightman's thought is confused in its distinction between "perfection and infinity." The Theism of E. S. Brightman, a dissertation submitted to the Catholic University of America, 1936, p. 128ff.

The Given has the special purpose in Brightman's system of accounting for that surd or meaningless evil[78] which experience encounters in the world. It is also the basis of his doctrine of a finite God, the concept that has been the main target of his critics.[79]

In order to be God, the Supreme Person must know everything that can be known and be able to do everything that can be done; must, at the same time, be loyal to the conditions of rationality, responsibility, and personality or the cosmos would be mere chaos.

> "A moral God, eternally active, eternally creative, eternally reasonable, is indeed a God who will forever and changelessly be loyal to the same fundamental principles of obligation and value; but he is also a God for whom progress is a real experience, and a God who is limited by the very conditions of his being."[80]

Evolution in man's experience testifies, and is sufficient testimony, that such a God is creatively at work.[81]

God who is creative, supreme, and personal is limited within His own nature by "Given" experiences that are eternally present and which

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[78] This is sometimes called "nondisciplinary evil" or evil which cannot be explained as the result of choosing evil ends, or correlated with any process of valuation.

[79] Cf. A. C. Knudson, The Doctrine of God, pp. 273-275, and The Doctrine of Redemption, pp. 204-212; L. Harold DeWolf, The Religious Revolt Against Reason, pp. 170-172, 184-185; and Andrew Banning, "Professor Brightman's Theory of a Limited God, a Criticism," THE HARVARD THEOLOGICAL REVIEW, 27 (1934), pp. 145-168. For a defense of Brightman's position, see Peter A. Bertocci, Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1951), pp. 430-440.

[80] Brightman, E. S., Religious Values (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1925), p. 68

[81] Ibid., p. 206

are uncreated by God's will, and with which His will must struggle to control. Thus, by lifting the pain and struggle which is everywhere experienced on earth into the life of the divine, Brightman believes his view to be closer to the empirical facts of evolution and of personal daily life, and especially significant in that it provides a more satisfactory solution of the problem of evil than traditional theism. The issue here is sharply drawn and requires careful statement.

What is affirmed about God in Brightman's view? He has more to do than He has yet done and is capable of growth; is, indeed, in process eternally. He is not the cause of evil, though He can bring meaning and value out of all possible misery.[82] "God is a person supremely conscious, supremely valuable, and supremely creative, yet limited both by the free choices of other persons and by restrictions within His own nature."[83] For this God, though He be frustrated for the moment by the limitation of the Given, and though His purposes for good are delayed, still these purposes cannot fail.[84]

Though the idea of a limited God is at first abhorent to the religious sensibilities of those who have traditionally celebrated His omnipotence and omniscience, the evidence for God in all religious

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[82] Brightman, The Problem of God, p. 11

[83] Ibid., p. 113

[84] Ibid., p. 122

knowledge comes from experience, and we must think of God, if we are to think accurately, in a way that makes experience intelligible.[85] Experience teaches us that though some evils are traceable to the human will, we cannot impute to man the blame for the slow and painful ordeal of human progress or such evils as earthquakes, cyclones, and the killing power of diseases. For Brightman these are difficulties, obstacles, "dark factors" which must be understood as "elements within the life of a good God."[86] This means that though God does not deliberately choose the cruelties of evolution, they represent the "necessary outcome" of his own eternal Given nature, out of which he is "always" bringing a higher good. God's finitude means, if one can invert Brightman's term, his "imperfect perfection." Or as Brightman has it, "His perfection and the perfection of his world consist in their perfectibility."[87]

Brightman buttresses his argument for a finite God with an argument from the experience of consciousness and human freedom. The effects of man's choices are always in some sense beyond man's direct control, just as man cannot control all the conditions from which he must choose. There may well be something analogous in the divine freedom. "With all the creative power of God there may be something Given in his nature as subject matter for his choice."[88] If, adds Brightman, God's power is

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[85] Ibid., p. 125

[86] Ibid., p. 126

[87] Ibid., p. 130

[88] Ibid., p. 132

limited by man's freedom, there are implications for God's foreknowledge and "he cannot be thought of as knowing in advance what a free person will choose."[89] However, despite the limitations and the obstacles in his path, and by overcoming them in time, the finite God works endlessly toward his ends and despite the "drag" of the Given, he is gradually realizing his purposes.

"God is perfect in will," says Brightman, "but not perfect in achievement; perfect in power to derive good from all situations, but not in power to determine in detail what those situations will all be."[90] And here it is not a question of the kind of God we would prefer to have: it is a question of the kind of God required by the facts of experience. The Given in God accounts for those evils experienced for which there is no human causation and which impede or thwart the attainment of the highest values, and does so, says Brightman, by limiting the will and foreknowledge of God without limiting His rationality or His goodness.[91] The Given accounts for natural evils, the "mistakes of evolution" and gives God an eternal reason for activity. It makes Him more a person, more attuned to human striving and suffering. A struggling God who wrests meaning from His achievements over the Given by the activity of His rational will is more credible than the image of Him in traditional theism,

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[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid., p. 137

[91] Ibid., p. 192

and accounts in better fashion than alternative views for the paradoxical assertion of religious experience that its object is at once a Mighty God and a Suffering Servant.

For Brightman, such a God is the only coherent inference from our experience. If God had been both infinitely good and omnipotent, sin, pain, and the need for redemptive action would never have existed. Their existence proves God to be finite.[92]

> "Surely if God were omnipotent beyond our poor power to conceive, he could have created a race of free beings who would always choose righteousness...even though in theory they were free to sin."[93]

Brightman's whole theology turns around the problem of evil. For his teacher, Bowne, the evils of the world were never a reflection on the power or goodness of God, because they were instruments in God's plan and achievement of good implied obstacle, resistance and hardship as their necessary condition. When reason balked at the argument, Bowne counselled faith.[94] Knudson,[95] Brightman's fellow Personalist, was willing to follow Bowne, but Brightman regarded their view, as he regarded the traditional orthodox Christian view, as "the lazy man's

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[92] _____, The Finding of God (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1931), pp. 121-122

[93] Ibid., p. 173

[94] Bowne, B. P., Theism (New York: The American Book Co., 1902), p. 282

[95] Knudson, A. C., Doctrine of Redemption (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1933), pp. 259-261

comfort of resting where we are."[96] Brightman would face facts and render them intelligible. If we look objectively at the facts of our experience, we see "purpose and reason struggling with refractory material and bring order out of disorder, beauty out of ugliness, life out of death, mind out of life."[97] Truth faced unflinchingly drives one to recognize and reflect these facts in his doctrine of reality. So driven, Brightman's finite God who struggles with the Given in his own nature is the inescapable result.

THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN IMMORTALITY

Brightman notes that belief in human survival is almost universal.[98] It is found in primitive religion and in the highest religions. Like belief in the personality of God, Brightman thinks that belief in survival develops in the later stages of religion. If it is not present in Judaism and Hinayana Buddhism, it appears in Christianity and Mahayana Buddhism. Though there is widespread doubt about immortality today, Leuba's survey of scientists (excluding psychologists) indicated that more of them believed in immortality than in God. Faith in immortality is for many more than a religious belief; it often holds together a healthy-minded attitude toward life. Yet, having said all this, Brightman

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[96] Brightman, Finding of God, p. 118

[97] _____, Problem of God, p. 175

[98] _____, The Philosophy of Religion, p. 387ff.

cautions us to remember that philosophy questions the truth of a belief, not the number of its adherents or the psychological helps or hindrances it contains. Philosophy is concerned with the truth, and the truth sought in this instance is the answer to two questions: Does personal consciousness survive the death of the body? If so, does it continue to exist forever? Before these questions can be fully explored or answered, a number of obstacles must be removed from the path of inquiry.

Experience and Immortality

How is the belief in immortality rooted in human experience? For primitive man it was perhaps dreams which caused him to believe in a spirit world. Developed forms of belief in immortality are rooted in the experience of purpose. Civilized man is not only aware of purposes, but also of purposes unfulfilled, of values the chief trait of which appears to be their incompleteness. "Our life, then, is essentially a life of purpose, but of uncompleted purpose."[99] Browning's poem, Cleon, infers faith in survival for the unrealized purposes of the poet's soul. Man finds that purpose is the most general and most constant feature of his existence. He sees that these purposes are capable of infinite extension, variety, and growth in realization. Death seems to bring these purposes to an end; in the face of death in survival is "the belief that purpose is a better clue to man's real nature and destiny

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[99] Ibid., p. 389

than is death."[100] Both purpose and death are recognized as facts of experience. Which gives truer insight into man's future? If death is final, that must be faced and values in present life affirmed[101] and enjoyed while they are possessed. However, if purpose is the clue to cosmic reality, there is reason to suppose that the cosmic purpose may cause personal consciousness to continue after the death of the body. In either case the conclusion is not self-evident; many arguments for immortality must be discarded as useless, many against it are just as inadequate.

Weak Arguments Against Immortality

Brightman states and rejects the useless and inadequate arguments[102] against immortality in summary fashion as follows: To the objection that belief in survival is fantasy because it arose from dreamlife, he states that the truth or falsity of an argument lies elsewhere than the original source of the idea. If it is suggested that there exists no evidence from sense perception of life after death, he answers that not all knowledge of reality has its source in sense experience, and sensation is not our criterion of truth. When it is said that the desire for immortality is selfish, it must be remembered that the selfishness

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[100] Ibid.

[101] Hocking has said that if death is the end, then it cancels out previous meaning.

[102] These arguments are paraphrased from the chapter, "The Problem of Human Immortality" in The Philosophy of Religion, p. 389ff.

of a belief is no criterion of its truth and, in any event, the desire for immortality is no more selfish than the desire to live tomorrow.[103] When it is argued that in nature what begins must end, it needs to be pointed out that while this may be true of physical motion, it is not true of a line drawn out infinitely in a given direction. It is sometimes argued that immortality must be rejected because "easy belief is a crime." This, says Brightman, is an argument against gullibility rather than immortality. The disbelief of scientists is regarded by some to carry great weight; yet scientists' opinions outside their fields of special competence carry no more weight than the opinion of a geographer about biology. To the objection of William James (which Brightman refuses to believe he meant to be taken seriously) that immortality is undesirable because the universe would eventually be overcrowded with souls, it should be answered that a spirit occupies no space, and that God can and will provide whatever is needed. Finally, it is added that social influence is an adequate substitute for immortality. Such a view makes each person a means to the welfare of others and neglects the intrinsic value of each person in himself. It makes one's deeds more important than one's self, for only deeds can be known and remembered by society.

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[103] Brightman's discussion of values affirmed that eternity could be suggested by the fact that if love was a value there was no time to stop loving.

Weak Arguments for Immortality

Brightman, then, turns to the arguments for immortality which he finds weak or unsatisfactory. Immortality is said to be true because the desire for it is universal. Yet, not only is the desire not universal, but, if it were, it would be no guarantee of truth. There is a universal desire for health without its being fulfilled. The same might be said for the argument that there is universal belief in immortality. It is not universal, and there could be agreement in error. It is argued that the belief is true because it gives men inspiration, faith or confidence, and reconciles them to tragedies. History shows that many have had confidence in, or gained inspiration from, erroneous beliefs. What can be learned from this argument is that if belief in immortality is true it is a helpful truth, but it does not show that it is true. It may be declared that there is proof for immortality by analogy of other natural processes, as that which leads from the caterpillar to the butterfly. Such an argument is based on transition from one kind of biological life to another and does not provide adequate basis for the transition from the biological realm to the spiritual realm. Some declare that immortality is assured because the mind is the guide and controller of the work of the brain and exerts therapeutic influences over the body. But experience notes that the obverse is also true and, if the one argument proved the immortality of the soul, the other would prove the immortality of the body. Some rest the case for immortality

on evidence from psychic phenomena. Brightman admits that this evidence exists, but states that it is too sketchy and incomplete (and often too trivial) to provide dependable proof. If it were established as true, it would prove no more than that some souls survive bodily death for a while. Endless life would still be problematic.

The problem of revelation needs to be considered separately, for it is the basis for the hopes of many who would acknowledge that there cannot be proof either way. Belief in divine revelation is common to most developed religions, and immortality is prominent as one of the things revealed. The validity of the revelation claim needs more than the claim. It must not be the object of unquestioning faith but of rigorous and empirical examination. Only so can the wild and false revelation claims be separated from true revelation. The evidence for immortality will then be found not in the revelation but in the tests to which any revelation-claim must be subjected.[104]

Strong Arguments Against Immortality

So far the arguments have been weak and of little consequence, says Brightman, but there are some larger problems which cannot be dismissed

[104] Brightman says that this argument can be applied to the Resurrection of Jesus, or to any other religious belief. This means, finally, that there is never a final authority given to revelation. The final word belongs to a critical, empirical analysis of experience which tests the claims of revelation.

so easily. He has in mind the position of physiological psychology, basically a materialism, which asserts that consciousness is dependent on the body, specifically the brain. Thus, at death the cause of consciousness is destroyed and it is absurd to expect a continuing effect without a cause.[105] Thus, personality lasts only as long as the body. Metaphysically, such a view is finally adequate or inadequate in terms of one's postulates. The possible postulates must be examined before the case can rest. Those Brightman discusses are postulates undergirding postivism, materialism, and personalism.

Positivism, discussed earlier in relation to the realm of persons and values, affirms that there are two kinds of meaningful propositions, the logical and the empirical.[106] Logical propositions are necessary because tautological, but give no information about the world. Empirical propositions are probable and refer only to sense experience. It follows from such premises that there is no meaning or factual content in the propositions that there is a transcendent God or a future life. Brightman's objection to positivism is that experience is richer and more inclusive than sensation or pure logic.

Materialism is more restrictive than positivism. It makes sensation the gateway to knowledge, but says that the universe consists, not of

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[105] Brightman has in mind here the case made by Corliss Lamont's The Illusion of Immortality.

[106] Brightman uses A. J. Ayer's Language, Truth, and Logic as the representative statement of positivism, especially chapters 1, 2 and 4.

verifiable sensations, but of material things and processes essentially unexperiencable. It is the thesis of materialism that the only true substance or cause in the universe is material substance and its activities.[107] Thus our body causes our personal consciousness and the latter will cease with the former. Such a view, says Brightman, fails to account for the mental character of sensations, for the rational order of things, for memory, unity of personal experience. More seriously, it leaves unexplained how motions of matter can produce consciousness or values.

> "If materialism is true, consciousness is a stranger in the universe and its intrusion must be accepted as a miracle; if theism or personalism be true, the facts of consciousness are clues to the nature of all reality."[108]

Theism: Strongest Argument for Immortality

If there is only one vigorous argument against immortality (which in many forms is still reducible to materialistic philosophy), so there is one strong argument for immortality (theistic philosophy). If there is a supreme, creative, cosmic person--God--then there is an infinitely good being committed to the eternal[109] conservation of values.[110]

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[107] Brightman, Philosophy of Religion, p. 398

[108] Ibid., p. 399

[109] From our previous analysis the word "eternal" could just as well be "perennial."

[110] Brightman says that this argument has its imple and effective statement in Charles R. Brown's Living Again (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1922).

> "It comes to this: if reason, as idealism understands it, is trustworthy, then immortality is a fact. If value is to be found in experience, even when experience is taken as cynically as it is by Schopenhauer, and if personality is a spiritual whole that finds value through its own membership in the universal order which includes but transcends all human persons, there is substantial ground for reasonable hope of immortal life."[111]

God, the cosmic person, controls and directs all natural processes and cooperates with all other persons.

> "Since all true values are experiences of the fulfillment of ideal purposes by persons, the existence of values depends on the existence of persons. Value is personality at its best. God, the Conserver of values, must be God, the Conserver of persons."[112]

Stated another way, Brightman's argument at this point can be summed up in the proposition that if God is a success as God, immortality is assured. Every argument for God, whether as finite or as absolute, is an argument for His goodness; similarly, is an argument for His obligation to maintain persons in existence as intrinsic values that could not be lost without a total failure of God's good purpose.[113] Thus, if all persons perish with their bodily death, God's position is unenviable. Either He would continue endlessly to create new persons or He would give up the enterprise of creation. The former would be a cosmic bonfire

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[111] Brightman, Immortality in Post-Kantian Idealism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925) (Ingersoll Lecture), p. 12

[112] _____, A Philosophy of Religion, p. 401

[113] Ibid.

with each generation warmed by the burning of the previous one; God and man could look back and see no permanent results, no persons treated as ends in themselves, no life coming to full development. God's ceasing to create would imply His failure. No results would remain except in God's memory. "A disappointed and frustrated God would remain--and all the intrinsic value of each person (except God) would be irretrievably lost."[114]

When it comes to a choice between materialism and theism, the decision depends upon the adequacy of their postulates. The postulates of materialism are rooted in the initial data materialism finds in sense experience. Theistic postulates must account for all this initial data and, as well, for the entire range of conscious experience (sense data, personal consciousness, reason,memory, purposes, freedom, and value); in short, it must account for all that materialism included and failed to include. Brightman admits that it cannot be asserted on any empirical or rational basis that theism is the only possible view or that a rigorous necessity can be ascribed to its "proof." The choice between theism and materialism is finally a choice that assesses the difference in what they include or account for.

> "Whereas materialism leaves the existence of consciousness and of spiritual life a mystery, theism shows consciousness to be a rational expression of the nature of the universe."[115]

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[114] Ibid., p. 402 Brightman notes that the position he has stated, that arguments for God are the arguments for immortality, find agreement in all major philosophical believers in immortality with the exception of McTaggart who believed in immortality but rejected theism.

[115] Ibid., p. 403

God, rather than Matter, provides a more inclusive and coherent ultimate ground for all the facts. Thus it rationally follows that faith in immortality is better grounded than is materialistic denial of that faith.

> "A universe in which materialism is false, conscious experience is valid, development is a fundamental law, and there are values, is a universe which, thus far, seems to invite immortality. If it be also a universe of metaphysical unity, the basis for faith seems to be more substantial; but if it be a universe in which knowledge is restricted to precise information about phenomena, while man remains ignorant of any meaning in reality as a whole, its climate is too bleak for belief in endless life to thrive therein."[116]

Conditional Immortality

Concerning the universality of salvation, or the inherent immortality of every human being, Brightman affirms a conditional immortality.[117] There are two problems to be taken into account: the power of God and the goodness of God. Brightman holds that the finite character of God provides no definite barrier to universal salvation.

> "Since experience shows that the limits within which the Creator works are compatible with His own control of The Given at every stage of which we have knowledge, it seems a reasonable faith that he who creates and sustains personalities in this world has resources sufficient to continue their existence in another order."[118]

If God's power is adequate, then the problem turns to His goodness. Brightman rejects as monstrous traditional views of hell which, he says,

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[116] Brightman, Immortality in Post-Kantian Idealism (Ingersoll Lecture), p. 14

[117] See J. V. Simpson, Man and the Attainment of Immortality (N.Y.: H. Doran Company, 1833) for a typical Christian presentation of this view.

[118] Brightman, Philosophy of Religion, p. 407 It is difficult to understand how experience shows this to anyone except God. The "other order" is incongruent with Brightman's earlier insistence that everything belongs within the order of experience which can be known of God or man.

make God as cruel, vengeful, and unrelenting as the most hateful and arbitrary human sinner. To make an eternal destiny dependent on choices during a short human life violates any human sense of justice. Yet Brightman has his own schemata for including some as against all beings. Those are immortal whom God judges to be capable of developing worthily at any time in their future existence. Imbeciles and other defectives might more justly be allowed to "die when their time comes rather than to preserve them as aimless immortals."[119] On the other hand, some subhuman animals might be gifted enough that, given eons, they might undergo a lofty spiritual evolution. Again, it is conceivable that there are some human beings who become so vicious or vile that even God may despair of arousing them to any higher aspirations. Refusing the attempt to define the exact conditions making immortal life possible, Brightman concludes that it is not inherent in the human being as such, but rather is conditional on the presence in the person of genuine potentialities for spiritual development. It is difficult to determine how the contours of the terrain of the immortal world, or for that matter, how the future life of persons can be filled out even in such sketchy outline as we have here, when one remembers the limits Brightman set about knowledge and experience. One perhaps should note that his final work keeps a judicious silence in these matters and attempts neither a structural correlation between the present life and a future life nor a flight of fancy about what a future life ought or might be. In our final chapter we shall state why we think that silence is the better part of wisdom.

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[119] Might not a good God "heal" them?

THE THEISTIC NATURALISM OF HENRY NELSON WIEMAN

It may well be the case, as Schneider has suggested, that the careers of the ideas designated by the terms "new realism" and "new naturalism" are still too young to merit biography, and that it is too early to say more by way of evaluating them than that their significance is veiled in the future.[1] Professor Williams has said that process philosophy, one dimension of the new naturalism, is itself still in process.[2] One might note, however, that though the biography cannot be written at this time, it may be possible to detect the main outlines of a direction being taken or an emphasis being made. Though nothing definitive can be ventured by way of stating the eventual results of the new naturalism, notable attempts have been begun to interpret what it means for the present philosophical and theological scene. Wieman and Meland have tried to place naturalism as one of our main contemporary perspectives.[3] Randall has traced the lineage of naturalism with greater care and sympathy than any recent philosophical historian.[4] Countless works have approached one or

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[1] Schneider, H. W., A History of American Philosophy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946), p. viii

[2] Williams, D. D., What Present Day Theologians are Thinking (revised edition) (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), p. 74

[3] Wieman, H. N. & Meland, B. E., American Philosophies of Religion (New York: Willett, Clark & Co., 1936) The four main groupings or traditions they describe are supernaturalism, idealism, romanticism, and naturalism. Within the naturalist group they include evolutionary theists, cosmic theists, religious humanists, and empirical theists (inwhich they place themselves).

[4] Randall, J. H., The Making of the Modern Mind (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1926)

another aspect of naturalism, either as champion or critic. Thus, though the biography cannot be written, the materials from which such a work might eventually be drawn is currently being produced. And it is fitting that such is the case, for naturalism has an importance to the modern period unmatched by other points of view.

Wieman and Meland describe four main perspectives operating on the contemporary scene; yet it appears that in recent years naturalism has been creative of, and storm center for, the most significant debates. The issues at stake in the battles it has waged are closer to the experience through which Western man has been going, and this is especially true of the concerns with which he has been preoccupied in his secular life. To note its relevance, however, is not an endorsement of naturalism's position or a value judgment about its merit. In a scientific period marked by technological and industrialized society, the items of greatest relevance to man's intellectual climate and tendencies find their expression in the issues naturalism raises, even though they may not receive an adequate solution in the answers which it provides. We will see how the gradual diminution of concern about, or systematic treatment of, the problem of eternal life is reflected in the preoccupation with concerns of "present," as opposed to "eternal," dimensions.

The concern in this study is not with naturalism as a whole, but with one member of that group, namely, H. N. Wieman. It has been noted before that naturalism has had a twofold response to religion. There have been Naturalists for whom religious inquiry is either ignored as lacking

importance or shunned as emotion which must remain outside the realm of reason or knowledge. There are also Naturalists for whom religion is important, and who insist that it should be subjected to the same rigor of scientific method as any other area of human experience. Wieman decidedly belongs to the latter group. His is, as he has characterized it, a "theistic naturalism." The full meaning and appropriateness of this designation will become apparent as the analysis of his thought progresses.

Wieman's Intellectual and Religious Heritage

Wieman (1884-) began his philosophical development as an absolute Idealist, embracing the teachings of Josiah Royce. Early in his development he became suspicious of absolutism's claims and skeptical of the popularity idealism enjoyed at the time among Christian Apologists as the philosophical expression of theological doctrines. There was an interlude in Wieman's development as he studied in Europe with Windleband and Troeltsch, the first of whom he found stimulating but merely as a systematizer of ideas. The latter he found wanting when he could not accept an emphasis on history as adequate for the formulation of a philosophy of life. It was at Harvard on his return that he found the stimulation for the development of his own viewpoint in religious philosophy as he studied with Perry and Hocking. To Hocking he declares himself chiefly indebted for religious insights, though this does not imply an acceptance of Hocking's system or way of clothing his insights. We shall see later that it

is a strain of mysticism which unites these men, rather than their formal thought.

Wieman later drew heavily on Whitehead and Dewey as he attempted to formulate a philosophy free of the errors which seemed to him to be inherent in any idealistic framework for the expression of the Christian faith. Whitehead's work in particular was to be of great influence in his thought. Process and Reality was characterized by Wieman as "the most magnificent achievement of constructive imagination that modern times can show." This work and Whitehead's The Concept of Nature and Religion in the Making he termed "exciting discoveries" in his personal intellectual quest.[5] Others who influenced Wieman's development include J. C. Smuts (holism), Dewey (experimentalism in his methodology and in his theory of value), Barth, Brunner, Tillich, and Berdyaev (the appreciation of traditional Christian symbols in the expression of the faith).[6]

In writing about his own place in the empirical theist group, Wieman says that he agrees with Dewey, Ames, Mathews, and Smith in that "he starts with the experience of value in the environing world of events as the means of deriving criteria for his definition of God and religion."[7]

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[5] Article by H. N. Wieman in Contemporary American Theology I, (edited by Virgilius Ferm, Round Table Press, 1932 - two volumes), pp. 345, 346.

[6] "Some Blind Spots Removed" in a series entitled "How My Mind Has Changed in This Decade" - The Christian Century, LVI: 4, January 25, 1939, pp. 116-118. It should be remarked that Wieman has disagreed sharply at various points with all those who influenced him, particularly the last group mentioned--all of whom he would place, for varying reasons, in the category of supernaturalism which he emphatically rejects.

[7] Wieman & Meland, op. cit., p. 295 (John Dewey, Edward Scribner Ames, Shailer Mathews, and Gerald Birney Smith)

Yet, he says that he differs from these men in that he pursues the empirical path to the end of its trail, "holding literally to its method by insisting that God is actually an object of experience, apprehended and discerned as any other object in its environment."[8] We will see later how this empiricism shapes Wieman's view of God in a distinctive way.

It has been Wieman's empiricism rather than his "liberalism" which has caused him to contend with the neo-supernaturalism to which he so strenuously objects. Neo-supernaturalism can meet neither the religious nor the cultural crisis of the day. The religious crisis is the break-up of the traditional bases of religious certainty, and cannot be helped merely by reaffirming or re-stating that tradition. The cultural crisis is seen most clearly as the need for an authoritative guide by which men can deal with powers now grown alarmingly large. Science needs to be rooted in, and guided by, the reality which is the chief reference of religion. Religion, on the other hand, needs science to achieve a method to gain certainty. With the proper scientific method, religion can reconstruct its myths into operative concepts for religious life and devotion. Neo-supernaturalism rejects science and thereby the means of distinguishing truth from falsehood. It eschews scientific methods such

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[8] Ibid., Dewey, Ames, and Mathews do not make God an object of experience but a symbol designating a certain ideal or sustaining aspect of the world's life; for Dewey, the activity relating the ideal and the actual; for Ames, the world idealized; for Mathews, the concept expressive of the reality which relates man and the personality-producing activities. For all of these views, God is a conceptual, not a perceptual reality.

as observation, inference, and experimentation, leaving the doors open to fanaticism, bigotry, violence, and the horrors that can result from epistemological normlessness. Wieman questions the neo-supernaturalists' use of paradox and myth and asks how they can be valid avenues to truth. How can the claims of traditional supernatural beliefs be justified against those, for instance, of Mary Baker Eddy or Hitler? The normlessness of neo-supernaturalism makes it incapable of providing the needed certainty.[9] Wieman approves neo-supernaturalism insofar as it attempted to preserve the distinctiveness of religion and refused to "merge the idea of God and the ways of God with the structures of modern thought."[10]

One final aspect of Wieman's heritage must be noted, namely, the intense religiousness and mystical quality of his life and teaching. One suspects that this is the dimension of Hocking which stayed with Wieman after he had rejected the latter's idealism. Perhaps it has been this element of his experience which has made him restless, both with traditional orthodox doctrine and all idealistic philosophies which attempted to give orthodoxy a rationale. Mysticism, he writes, provides the radical originality needed in religion and life--not mysticism luxuriated in for its own sake, but mysticism which,

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[9] In the "Concluding Perspectives" of American Philosophies of Religion, Wieman discusses a probable forecast for the future in the relation between neo-naturalism and neo-supernaturalism, stating as a final hope that the former rather than the latter would eventually assume the role of guide even though both would continue as strong elements of the American religious scene.

[10] Wieman, Growth of Religion (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1938), p. 254

> "revitalizes old meanings with new insights, brings on 'conversion,' and once in a while lifts human history bodily into new channels, as shown in those periods when great religions were born."[11]

There are elements, both in Wieman's value theory and in his view of the transcendence of God, which seem finally to depend upon such a mystical base. He used the term, "problem-solving-mysticism," quite early in his writing, and the functional value of mysticism suggested in this term indicates the special way in which mysticism is understood and used.

In summary, then, Wieman's development placed him with the philosophical forces which were challenging American idealism. In the Chicago School he inherited stress on empirical method, polemic against orthodoxy, and the social understanding of religion. "As rebel and elaborator, he became the critic of the half-way empiricism which reigned and the anthropocentric orientation of the theism of the group."[12] Any treatment of his thought must keep in mind the polemics in which Wieman engaged. One notes that the progression of his thought can be understood in part by shifting of emphasis in one area of his polemic with supernaturalism. In his early books the great opponent is fundamentalism. However, as neo-orthodoxy arose, it was treated with a critical assessment often amounting

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[11] _____, Religious Experience and Scientific Method (New York: Macmillan, 1926), p. 345

[12] Farley, E., The Most High (Dissertation submitted to Columbia University, 1958), p. 247f. Hammar contends that Wieman's empiricism is not finally empirical, but falls back upon a "metaphysics the ground of which is none other than the subjective empiricism of religious liberalism in general." Christian Realism in Contemporary American Theology (Uppsala, Sweden: Lundequistska, 1940), p. 47

to a scorn more biting than that accorded to fundamentalism.[13] One detects, however, after the movement in Wieman's thought from the Whitehead to the Dewey phase, a shift toward a greater appreciation for, though not acceptance of, the neo-orthodox position. His latest work uses the term "ultimate commitment" in its title, the meaning of which is a key to Wieman's later thought, and which in many respects is akin to Tillich's "ultimate concern." Though one may note this direction in Wieman's thought, we find that much of his thought and in particular his treatment of such central Christian doctrines as Revelation, Incarnation, Resurrection and Atonement is, by the nature of his method, sharply divergent from traditional Christian apologetics. And if Christology is the point of greatest divergence between Wieman's thought and the "faith of the fathers," the source of that divergence has to be found in the deeper problem of Wieman's doctrine of God. In the problem of God, Wieman's method is as important as are the conclusions he reaches. It is the rigor of his methodology which makes it difficult--if not impossible--for him to affirm as meaningful or valid, various elements of traditional Christianity. We see this first in relation to God, then in the treatment of the source of values, and finally as regards the ultimate or "eternal" destiny of man.

THE PROBLEM OF GOD

The Knowledge of God

God is an object of immediate experience, both perceived and conceived. God is spoken of as a process, a movement, a growth, operating in the midst

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[13] Wieman, "Neo-Orthodoxy and Contemporary Religious Reaction" in Religious Liberals Reply (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1947)

of things to shape and fulfill the good. To God is ascribed dynamic participation in the world, so that what God is and does in our midst is discernible. Unlike Dewey, Ames, and Mathews, whose "concept of God is an instrumental symbol, useful for denoting the ideal aspects to which men should devote themselves,"[14] Wieman believes that God is at work creatively shaping our lives for good; therefore, man must pursue a fuller knowledge of that working that he may, on the basis of his knowledge, serve it more wisely and completely. This accounts for the tentative element in Wieman's philosophy and is the reason he will commit himself to no final definition of God. He speaks of God in a "minimum definition" as the "Supremely Worthful" for all mankind. In his Religious Experience and Scientific Method he asserts simply, "Whatever else the word God may mean, it is a term used to designate that Something upon which all human life is most dependent for its security, welfare, and increasing abundance."[15] The emphasis on continual process bringing forth the good is central. After a survey of the great religious personalities of the West, Wieman concludes that religion is at its best, not when it furthers man's ideals, but as it provides revolutionary impetus against them.[16] One way of defining religion is in terms of commitment to whatever is the source of this perpetual transformation.

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[14] Wieman & Meland, op. cit., p. 296

[15] Wieman, H. N., Religious Experience and Scientific Method (New York: Macmillan, 1926), p. 9

[16] _____, Issues of Life (New York: Abingdon Press, 1930), p. 146

When it is asked how God can be known, Wieman says that God's existence is demonstrated in the same way any other existence is established--by interaction with it after which concepts arise.[17] Wieman saw the weakness in liberal theology which wanted to be empirical but started out from the subjective religious experience.[18] Wieman saw that it was impossible to get beyond the theologically-destructive subjectivism of such foundations as religious experience, intuition, and mystical experience. Wieman attempted to set up an operative conception of God that would make it possible for others to achieve a similar experimental verification. Wieman recognizes that such a position raises the question of why God is not already known to everyone if he can be perceived. Wieman says at this point that, as in all refined perception, proper habits of sensitivity must be developed capable of grasping the elusive and wide set of events which is God. Thus, to say that God is perceivable is not to say that He is immediately or easily available to everyone.[19]

Farley has made a careful examination of the states in the development of Wieman's concept of God, with special emphasis on the quality of transcendence.[20] He notes that there is a corresponding narrowing of

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[17] _____, Is There a God? (with MacIntosh, D. C. & Otto, M. C.) (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1932), p. 118

[18] See Hammar, Realism in Contemporary American Theology, pp. 44-49 See also Wieman, H. N., Normative Psychology (with Wieman, Regina) (New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1935), p. 119f.

[19] Wieman, H. N., "Can God be Perceived?" Journal of Religion XXIII October 1943, pp. 23-32 Wieman comments that there is similarity between an existing but unperceived God and atomic energy or evolution which were present long before they were recognized or understood.

[20] Farley, op. cit., pp. 274-279

Wieman's metaphysical interests at cosmological levels as Wieman becomes increasingly interested in value theory. Farley believes that Wieman has progressively narrowed his God-concept, both at the level of the reality of God (creative event) and in his concept of the product of his functioning (qualitative meaning). Thus, where metaphysics dominates the definitions of God in the early writings, value theory dominates the definitions of God in the later period.

> "Thus, in spite of later narrowing, God has always been for Wieman that 'whatever-it-is' that does such-and-such. He is specific only in the sense that the whatever-it-is at least is an event of some kind, and the whatever-it-does is the source of human good."[21]

For Wieman's thought, God is always the term applying to the "supremely Worthful," the agent of highest good for man.[22] We are justified in using the term about whatever we find to be of supreme worth. The proper study of deity is axiological, not the pre-scientific ways of myth. If we can determine, says Wieman, what makes for the highest value, we have an accurate though minimal God-concept without the burdening traditional apparatus. With such an emphasis Wieman fashions his definitions of God. "God is that in the universe which will yield maximum security and increase of human good when lives are properly adjusted to him."[23] Again, God is "whatever in truth operates to save man from evil and to the greater good no matter how much this operating reality may differ from all traditional ideas about it."[24] Thus, God is an actually-existing objective

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[21] Ibid., p. 279

[22] Wieman, Is There a God?, p. 276

[23] _____, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth (New York: Macmillan, 1927), p. 59

[24] _____, The Problem of Religious Faith (manuscript unpublished), p. 4

reality "which is here all about us waiting to be perceived and interpreted when the social and psychological order of our minds is appropriately transformed."[25] He is not reducible to our subjective desires of what ought to be, and he is beyond all thoughts about him.

God's Transcendence

Despite the strong element of empiricism in Wieman's thought, there remains a strand which has reference to the hidden God, the Deus absconditus. This can be called the epistemological transcendence of God. The minimal definition which Wieman sought was the attempt to be sure that there was a divinely-functioning process in the world, without giving much by way of specific content to its nature. Wieman affirms that man can never know God fully, for man's conscious awareness "is only a peephole compared to all the riches and all the horrors that are in this world."[26] Again God is that "undefined and unexplored totality of what is best as it emerges sequentially in concrete situations where choices are made."[27] But He is never wholly other, or He could not be known.[28]

There are four ways of stating the transcendence of God as these appear in Wieman's thought. In addition to the epistemological transcendence noted above, there are: (1) Metaphysical transcendence, in which God is conceived as the source of cosmic integration. This dimension

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[25] _____, Growth in Religion (with Walter M. Horton) (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1938), p. 315

[26] Ibid., p. 260

[27] Ibid., p. 292

[28] Ibid., pp. 343-344

of Wieman's thought has, like his total theism, shifted in emphasis, reflecting his movement from Whiteheadian and metaphysical interests to contextualist and axiological ones. (2) Functional transcendence, in which God is seen to be the source of human good. God is Creator, not as primum movens or cause of everything that happens, but the source of growth (especially of organic connections), and works at wider levels than man can work generating both the appreciable world and man's appreciating mind.[29] (3) Soteriological transcendence or God as transcendent in relation to man's needs. God is Judge and Good in relation to man's sin (Sin is man's rejection of the power which can create good), judging man's evils and his goods or ideals.[30] God breaks up man's fixed goods and desires, his plans and ideals, in order that an openness and transforming power can be liberated. God thus gives better than man can ever conceive or completely receive.[31] Thus, God's initiative dominates rather than man's, and the infinite extension of God's goodness and man's possible response means that there will be no point of achievement in the time process recognizable as a final resting place.

It is more important for the present study to note that there are three kinds of transcendence which Wieman rejects: (1) He rejects that type which transcends reason and leaves man, he thinks, without any way of finding the source of human good. (2) He rejects all forms of ontological

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[29] Wieman, H. N., Source of Human Good (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), pp. 195-196

[30] Compare Wieman's Is There a God?, p. 243 and The Issues of Life, p. 173

[31] Wieman, H. N., Growth in Religion, p. 261

transcendence which would place God beyond time and events. He does not want to accept the contradictory statements implicit in much traditional Christian doctrine that God works in history but resides beyond it. If he is beyond it, it follows that he is other than a process and thus cannot do anything.[32] (3) Wieman also rejects a type of transcendence which makes God sovereign over evil in such a way that the final and ultimate victory of good is assured. This would reduce evil to an illusion.[33]

Is God Personal?

Wieman has fluctuated in his answer to this question, at one time rejecting and at others making room for the partial acceptance of such a concept. "I claim that when we try to apply these concepts of mind and personality to a reality so rich as God we have to stretch them so far that they split and break to pieces."[34] It is plain that there cannot be a primordial personality, sustaining and promoting the supreme goods of life; rather "God is that interaction between things which generates and magnifies personality and all its highest values."[35] Other passages suggest an openness to the possibility of a personal God, and he states that he would not deny God's being personal because his basic method shuns such

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[32] _____, Source of Human Good, p. 32

[33] Ibid., pp. 87-88

[34] Wieman, H. N., "God is More than We Can Think," Christendom 1:3, Spring, 1936, p. 433

[35] _____, "Theocentric Religion" in Contemporary American Theology, Vol. I, pp. 350-351

specific statements.[36] Wieman will not object to God being called a supernatural person if such can meet the conditions of testing he lays down.[37] At another place he accepts person as a proper symbol for no better symbol is available. Farley has contrasted Wieman and Tillich in the way they view God as supra-personal, saying that for Tillich it means that God is the Ground of everything personal, whereas for Wieman God is supra-personal not in the sense that being includes personal being, but in the sense that personality is annulled.[38]

Wieman's divergence from the position of the biblical faith is important here not only for the doctrine of God, but as well for eternal life. Biblical religion, insofar as it affirms hope concerning eternal life, derives that hope ultimately from the promises of a personal God. It did not demonstrate by philosophical means the structural possibilities or necessities that present life might survive death. Wieman's hesitancy in his use of the personal image of God means that whatever hope he affirms concerning survival of death or eternal life[39] will be made on other grounds than those we encounter in traditional Christian apologetics. It

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[36] _____, Is There a God?, pp. 279-280

[37] _____, The Directive in History (Boston: Beacon Press, 1949), p. 53

[38] Compare Tillich, Systematic Theology I, p. 245 and Wieman, Growth of Religion, (with W. M. Horton) (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1938), p. 361. The annulling of divine personality represents a gain rather than a loss for Wieman, for functionally it means that God can do what personality cannot. It does not mean that God is "sub-personal."

[39] The terms "survival of death" and "eternal life" are not to be considered as identical or interchangeable.

is in his treatment of values rather than his doctrine of God that we find a clue to his position concerning the meaning of man's history and destiny. Whatever can be said about survival or eternal life must be elaborated from the analysis of "process" and "values" as these are treated in Wieman's thought.

PROCESS AND VALUES

The Underlying Presuppositions

The new metaphysics[40] may be characterized as a new vision of the sciences imaginatively informed and elaborated, which unites some form of field theory with the notion of emergence. Following James and Bergson and rejecting Kantianism in favor of a more radical empiricism, the new metaphysics attempts a more realistic appeal to history and experience. It finds in the concrete events of history, communities, and human lives an endless creativity. Creativity, its key term, is not merely an abstraction but the continual happening--the substance of every moment, the most immediate and persistent occurrence--giving actuality and character to events as they emerge. It is neither abstract nor impersonal for, though the metaphysician may use abstract symbols, he will have sympathy and rapport with the imagery and poetic symbolism of the biblical writers. He will seek more definitive terms for the meaning through parable and poetry.

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[40] The term "new metaphysics" is used by Professor Meland in an essay in which he relates "Process Philosophy" to Christian Faith. Meland, Bernard E., "Interpreting the Christian Faith Within a Philosophical Framework", The Journal of Religion, Vol. XXXIII, No. 2, p. 87ff (April 1953)

If creativity is the key word for the new metaphysics, there are also significant emphases which dominate its concerns and direct its method. The status of events is a case in point. Just as some systems have centered around such primary notions as Substance, Mind, Person, or Matter, the new metaphysics gives Event a special status. The new naturalism "asserts that there is nothing in reality accessible to the human mind more basic than events and their qualities and relations."[41] ("Relations" is another word for "structure.") Events and creativity are understood in a communal or social context for in the very nature of things there is an impulse of love which is dominant and regulative for the structure in process of emergence. Insofar as one can speak of a definitive end of existence, Wieman insists that the social nature of reality applies both to the ground of being and to the goal of emergence.

Such presuppositions of the new empiricism imply the need for a reformulation of traditional value theory. When the final emphasis is placed on emerging structures of meaning, the question must be asked, "Do values emerge?" Are there existing ultimate values which indicate where man is or is going in the emerging process of things? Are values transcendent? Are they empirically derived?

Wieman sets as his task the construction of an interpretation of value which will reject any attempt to give primary attention to values as "goods, as satisfaction, as quality or as human control."[42]

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[41] Wieman, The Source of Human Good, p. 6

[42] Ibid., p. 17

> "We shall try to demonstrate that there is a creative process working in our midst which transforms the human mind and the world relative to the human mind. We shall then show how transformation by this process is always in the direction of greater good. The human good thus created includes goods, satisfaction of human wants, richness of quality, and power of man to control the course of events."[43]

This greater good which Wieman envisages is impossible of attainment merely by seeking to increase goods or satisfactions or quality or power in and for themselves. The greater good, or axiological center of Wieman's thought, can be understood by reference to two key terms: the creative event and the resultant qualitative meaning. The terms require careful analysis for they imply most of the metaphysical presuppositions stated above and provide the principal reasons why we shall have to designate Wieman's position as temporalism.

Qualitative Meaning and Creative Event

> "Qualitative meaning is that connection between events whereby present happenings enable me to feel not only the quality intrinsic to the events now occurring but also the qualities of many other events that are related to them."[44]

Wieman means here the sense of the connectedness of experience and the richness in the value associations within existence which imply a time-transcending element. One can understand the way in which values are associated with one another and enhance one another by considering the

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[43] Ibid. (underline mine)

[44] Ibid., p. 18

personal experience of hearing footsteps one recognizes as those of a friend absent for many years. As he hears them approach there will be many memory associations crowded into the experience that have no direct connection with the mere sound of the steps. Values do not happen independently, but in a complex in which they mutually enhance one another. Qualitative meaning is good, is positive, intrinsic value. Even so, qualitative meaning is not the guide to the greater good. It is rather a created good and has its source in a prior creative event which alone is the source of life's abundance.

The creative event is made up of four sub-events: emerging awareness of qualitative meaning derived from other persons through communication; integrating these new meanings with others previously acquired; expanding the richness of quality in the appreciable world by enlarging its meaning; deepening the community among those who participate in this total creative event of inter-communication.[45] Though the work of the philosopher and that of all who seek to know what life or values mean must treat primarily the specifically definable meanings and creative inter-communications which generate them, it must not be forgotten that there is a residual depth or deeper matrix of value underneath. This deeper matrix can be compared to an ocean on which there floats the rather thin layer of oil. The oil represents the portions knowable to the human mind; the ocean represents the infinitely complex structure of events composing the vast society of interacting organisms and their history. There is much more to reality

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[45] Ibid., p. 58

than can ever be known or receive intellectual formulation; yet those things that can be known and valued are dependent upon, and can have depth and richness of quality, only if they continue conjunct and integral with this deep complex structure of quality built up through countless ages before even the human mind appeared.[46]

Creative events are happenings in transit, events in process,

> "Not finished products, although they yield a finished product... the product of the total creative event, is always a new structure whereby some events are more widely and richly related in meaningful connections."[47]

Therefore, the creative event includes only that which brings a new structure by which the human mind distinguishes and relates events in such a way that there is greater richness of quality in happenings as they occur and greater range and variety of appreciated possibility.

> "This alone is the fourfold event described as emerging awareness of communicated meanings, the integrating of these meanings to create a new mentality in the individual, a new structure of qualitative meaning in the world, and a deeper and wider community among men."[48]

From the creative event flows the created intrinsic good of culture and the created instrumental good of civilization or technology. The distinction of values into creative, created intrinsic and created instrumental has practical importance, as the three kinds of value require a variety of action if human good is to be promoted. The promotion of that

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[46] Ibid., p. 66
[47] Ibid., p. 68
[48] Ibid.

good is the human problem most worthy of concern.

The Human Problem

The human problem is to shape human conduct and all other conditions to release the creative event to produce maximum good. As Wieman sees it,

> "the whole struggle of human life, the basic problem of industry and government, or education and religion, of sex and personal conduct, of family and neighborhood organization, is to provide and to maintain those conditions wherein the creative event can produce the maximum of qualitative meaning with minimum destruction of previously developed structures which enrich the world."[49]

Fear, hate, suspicion, deceit, concealment, exploitation, indifference, sloth, misunderstanding, cruelty, lust, arrogance--the list can be elaborated endlessly--thwart the creative event. The human problem, in short, centers in learning from and using the past to shape the future in the creative present. Wieman chooses to characterize the solution to man's problem in such a way as to indicate both a wider time reference and a focus of immediacy.

> "Thus the great problem is how to provide conditions more favorable for this creative event so that it can bring forth structures which will endow events with more richness of quality and scope of meaning."[50]

The emphasis is thus on growth of the potential, the emergence of value and being. At the same time the locus of the concern is not a future culmination so much as it is the present possibility. Salvation in these terms connotes wider and more significant present meaning. So

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[49] Ibid., p. 69

[50] Ibid., p. 70

conceived, the present is not enjoyment merely nor happiness, nor any fleeting or passing good--though goods may come and pass. Wieman makes the emergence of structured quality central. The creative event is, therefore, much more than a happening. Both words, creative and event, are to be given their fullest meaning. Something genuinely new is brought into being. The full importance of this aspect of Wieman's thought will appear later when we consider the problem of history and destiny.

Value and Determinism

What must be avoided in the schemata Wieman has elaborated is any suggestion that the "process" or "growth" or "creative event" is inexorable, determined, or in any way predestined. Responsibility is placed upon men as they attempt the infinitely complex task of submitting to and serving the creative event. Social and psychological conditions must be changed before men can move up "the steeps of greater good under the transforming power of the creative event."[51] Not to be transformed is to end the creative era and to fall, like other cultures and civilizations before, into decline--or even into destruction. Though men resist the breaking of comfortable stereotypes by painful stretching of perceptions and appreciations and, though they hesitate or reject any reconstruction of the world relative to themselves and their interests, still a kind of religious faith is required by which one commits himself to the creative event with a final devotion. Only by so doing can the old forms be broken up and

[51] Ibid., p. 74

the new values not as yet comprehended come into being. "The supreme vocation of history," says Wieman, "is in serving the creative event."

> "Every serious practical and theoretical problem finds its solution in clearing the path for creative transformation, and there is nothing else to be done that is worthy of man. Meeting the demands of this source of human good calls for all the moral rigor, all the labor and sacrifice, all the religious commitment of faith which human capacity can afford. There is, therefore, plenty for man to do in helping to create a better world."[52]

Wieman does not wish it to appear, however, that by merely taking thought man could add a cubit to his moral or spiritual stature. The creative event is supra-human in the sense that it opens the way, creates the necessary possibilities, enlivens the more profound and discriminating appreciation, as man never could of himself. "Man's creative ability is something produced in him as a consequence of the prior working of the creative event."[53] The creative event is thus supra-human, not in the sense that it works outside of human life, but in its creation of the good of the world as man cannot do. Men can obstruct or cooperate with the creative events in personal life, in the organization of society, in the physical and biological realm. When men meet <u>its demands</u>, greater human good flows from the creative event. But the actual creative event is not, and cannot be, the work of man. In this sense it is supra-human and transcendent. It is not transcendent in the sense of being non-temporal, non-spatial, and immaterial. It is discoverable by special and sensitive

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[52] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 74-75

[53] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 76 Wieman says that to fall into controversy over whether or not man is creative is to use the same word for different things, and as an argument ends as a merry-go-round.

analysis, though creativity is not readily accessible to awareness. It is proper to speak of it as "transcendent" if it is noted that the transcendence of creative good is functional rather than metaphysical.[54]

Does this position place Wieman with the supernaturalists? He answers yes and no. Man tends to think of creativity as supernatural, and has used mythical representations for expressing it. This was sufficient and expected until certain cultural conditions and scientific knowledge were achieved (especially in biology, psychology and social psychology). Drawing on these and from other cultural conditions in recent years, it has been possible to express what is meant by creativity. Yet, supernaturalism is still meaningful to this extent: Wieman declares that,

> "Like the ancient supernaturalism, and in opposition to almost all religions and philosophies that stand over against supernaturalism, the naturalism here defended repudiates the supremacy in value of all the goods and goals of the created, appreciable world and turns to what creates them for the sovereign good of life."[55]

It is to this sovereign good that man must commit himself that he may be transformed in any way that it may require. The creative event may be identified with God with the qualification that any intellectual formulation about a concrete reality is never more than a meagre, sketchy abstraction pertaining to it.[56]

Value and God

At various places Wieman speaks of God as a sustaining process, or

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[54] See Chapter 10, Source of Human Good.

[55] Ibid., p. 78

[56] Ibid., p. 305

condition of value, or again as the supreme value, as the goal of value-achievement. Just as a good is a fulfillment of an interest or possibility, so the supreme good must be the fulfillment of the most inclusive interest or the most inclusive system of interests.[57] The greatest conceivable value would be "the organization of this cosmos into that sort of system where every activity in it would be sustained by every other, and each activity would have all the meaning of the total system."[58] There is, however, a value beyond the greatest conceivable value, the supreme value which must be related to the actual as well as to the conceivable possible goods.[59] True values are in God and God is in nature; thus the supreme value or true ideal is the best that can be made out of the totality of all being.

In his earlier writing, Wieman uses the concept of growth as the one which most adequately embraces and expresses both actual achievement of value and the unlimited future possibilities of greater value-achievements. He speaks of the "growth of meaning in the world," of a "creative synthesis...the union of diverse elements in such a way that the new relation transforms them into a whole that is very different from the mere sum of the original factors."[60] The later term, appearing in The Source of Human Good, is the "creative event." In each case it is "connective growth" which constitutes the value; competitive or thwarting growths are, like

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[57] Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, p. 161

[58] _____, The Growth of Religion, pp. 266-267

[59] Cf. "Values: Primary Data for Religious Inquiry," Journal of Religion, XVI: 4, October 1936, pp. 379-380; also Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, p. 161

[60] _____, The Growth of Religion, pp. 325-367, cf. Normative Psychology of Religion, pp. 50-55. See also "Values: Primary Data of Religious Inquiry," Journal of Religion, XVI: 4 October 1936, pp. 403-405.

cancer, disvalues. Mere increment does not necessarily promote wider mutuality. The supreme value, then, is the unlimited connective growth of value-connections; God is "the growth of meaning and value." As Martin characterizes Wieman's thought at this point, "The supreme value is the 'value' of increasing values: the connective growth of connective growths."[61]

Value - Relative and Absolute

Absolute good means what is good under all conditions and circumstances, being relative neither to time, place, person, race, class, need, hope, desire, or belief. "It is a good that remains changelessly and identically the same in character so far as concerns its goodness."[62] It would continue the same without men, just as it worked with microscopic cells prior to the emergence of any higher organism. Creative good meets the requirements pertaining to absolute good. It is absolute also in that its demands are unlimited. It is unqualifiedly good in the sense that there is no perspective from which its goodness might be modified in any way. It is self identical "whether under the aspect of eternity or under the aspect of time, whether viewed from the standpoint of the beginning or the ending, whether

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[61] Martin, J. A., Jr., Empirical Philosophies of Religion. Martin accuses Wieman of using highly figurative and imaginative language and of not speaking of a definitely structured and definable object, entity, or "process" at all. Martin doubts if, even on Wieman's terms, the empirically-evident data are not processes rather than a process. Thus there can hardly be a supreme value as one process or structure. Wieman has given a better account of this problem in his The Source of Human Good where the creative event is seen as the nature and activity of God. See Source of Human Good, p. 305.

[62] Wieman, Source of Human Good, p. 79

judged by its origin or by its final outcome, whether viewed as means or as end."[63] Finally, creative good is absolutely trustworthy; the outcome of its working will always be the best possible outcome under the conditions, notwithstanding how it appears to men. It will keep going though all goods perish; it never fails.[64]

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[63] Ibid., pp. 80-81 Wieman means that these distinctions are irrelevant to the character of absolute goodness. He says by way of explanation: "Absolute, in any intelligible sense cannot mean 'out of relation.' It is relative to conditions, circumstances, organisms, and the like; but its character of goodness does not change when these relations change. Instead of being out of all relations, it is rather the one kind of goodness that, without losing its identity, can enter into all relations. It is good always and everywhere, therefore relative to everything." (footnote, p. 80)

[64] Wieman's description of the absolute good makes an interesting parallel to Paul's ode to love in I Corinthians 13.

Wieman objectively stated:
"Absolute good...never fails...is good under all circumstances...is not relative to time or place or person or class...would continue ...even if all human beings (tongues) should cease to exist, ...retains its character...under all changing conditions...its demands are unlimited...it continues...the same good even when it works with microscopic cells prior to the emergence of any higher organism...it is unqualifiedly good, whether from the worm's view or the man's view...it is entirely trustworthy...even when it may seem to us to be otherwise...it transforms our minds...when all other good is destroyed, it springs anew...it always produces good; it never fails...it is absolute." (Wieman's Source of Human Good, p. 80)

Paul subjectively stated:
"Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child I understood as a child. I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Created good, on the other hand, is relative value in all the senses that stand in contrast to the absolute. It is the structure of meaning connecting past and future that we feel and appreciate. Yet just as the particular chains of qualitative meaning having value for man may have no value for a microbe, so the created good does not remain the same under all circumstances and conditions nor in relation to every different sort of organism, human person, or social culture.[65] Created good is relative in its claims upon men in the sense that at some point the cost of achieving it is too great. One can always find some standpoint from which its value disappears or changes. There is no assurance that created good will abide; in fact, one would expect it to be constantly broken in order that the greater good might emerge. History will then be the interaction of relative and absolute good, the created and creative good.

The Absolute Good and Destiny in History

A claim might be made that the absolute good means all-powerful good, a good that finally overrules all evil so that in the end everything will come out all right, no matter how long or great the struggle. This blissful outcome, says Wieman, is neo-orthodoxy's "end of history...whatever that may mean." In this view there

> "is a transcendent realm, so it is asserted, where perfect and Almighty Good reigns supreme; but in our world of time and space and matter and history this almighty power of good is only partially regnant. Life may be a valley of frustration, but nothing can prevent ultimate, absolute, and complete regnancy of supreme value, somehow, sometime, somewhere, although the human mind cannot know how this may be."[66]

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[65] Wieman, Source of Human Good, p. 79

[66] Ibid., pp. 81-82

However, says Wieman, the claim that any kind of good is almighty cannot be defended. The creative good is not absolute in this sense, nor is anything else! Such a claim cannot be applied coherently to any interpretation of the nature of absolute good. The question might be asked whether Wieman does not, himself, elaborate a view which expects in history the very thing he rejects as otherworldly in neo-orthodoxy. Analysis will show that he is not free from a faith which contains its own eschatological element.

One must ask how radical is the difference in principle between the assertion in the traditional language of Christian faith that ultimately God is sovereign and Wieman's contention that the "creative good is absolutely trustworthy: it always produces good; it never fails." On the face of it, and with Wieman's sarcasm set aside ("The religious liberals gone Barthian...have not yet cast off that adolescent arrogance which swings between folly and hopelessness...when things go ill, they appeal to super-history."), the difference would seem to be no more radical than that between "it never fails" and "it eventually will succeed." Yet obviously the difference must be deeper and more real than this. Wieman actually rejects the apocalyptic element which places the locus of the victory as a moment in time or at a point terminating time--the end of time. He rejects as well the position that, though it tarry, the victory will surely come. On both of these counts he can be pressed a bit concerning whether he has not accepted in different terms much of what he is at pains to reject. In the first place, he wishes to preserve the continual encounter of good and evil in all the processes of life and

history. Salvation, whatever it means, must be won or lost "here in time." Yet, curiously enough, Wieman suggests the possibility of a transformation in history so radical that it resembles the Kingdom of God beyond history of traditional Christianity which he rejects. Wieman's faith is that history may eventually deliver men to a future in which

> "the creative event is empowered to render more appreciable the deeps of quality in the existing universe and the reach of possibility beyond...When history acquires Christ, creative power can save the world unto life everlasting."[67]

Has neo-orthodoxy consistently proclaimed the sort of otherworldliness Wieman has indicated, or has it a discernible emphasis on the continuing struggle within this world? In Barth's words, Paul's "whole creation in travail" (Romans 8:22) means that man is not free from "the contrasts in life and death, light and darkness, beauty and ugliness." Life in time is always ambiguous and what lies beyond this travail, says Barth, is "a matter for faith only."[68] In the meantime, the struggle with relative goods has to be entered into without absolutizing any one of them. Thus, if the faith of neo-orthodoxy sees a Last Day and a Final Judgment and the victory of God over all his enemies, Wieman's view of history implies the possibility of a new age when possibilities beyond the existing universe are brought into being by the creative event (sometimes identified with God). In terms of his method, his vision at this point must be labeled as faith or hope, and would seemingly belong to the same category

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[67] Ibid., p. 308 (underline mine)

[68] Barth, K., The Epistle to the Romans (translated by Edwyn C. Hoskyns) (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 312 See also Niebuhr's reply to Wieman's criticism in Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social, and Political Thought (edited by Kegley & Bretall, N. Y.: Macmillan, 1956), p. 447ff.

to which he has assigned the hope of traditional Christianity.

One further comment needs to be made about the issue between neo-orthodoxy and Wieman on the question of the final meaning of history. Wieman dismisses as incomprehensible the thought that salvation can come from beyond history, or occur at an end-of-time. Yet, his description of the creative event within time has its own incommensurability about it, for it has something uniquely new--a mystery of transformation that is never reducible to the parts or elements which make up the event. Time has no special property which adds to the creative event and, though creative events occur in time, there is no simple historical progression following from the mere passage of time. Yet the creative event has a quality of mystery which is not unlike that of the traditional position which relates time and eternity. In Wieman's thought it is a quality of unfathomable depth "below" the creative event; in Christian doctrine it is a transcendence "above" time. If Wieman's is a functional[69] rather than a metaphysical transcendence, the transcendental element needs to be accepted and not denied. In a final passage in which Wieman comes near to hypostatizing history, he says that history bears within itself the redemptive possibility,

> "history is the answer...it can endow the dying day of each generation with a splendor deepening through the ages. History is the field in which creative power wins this tragic victory over time and matter and the evil ways of men."[70]

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[69] See supra, page 182

[70] Wieman, Source of Human Good, p. 309

TIME AND ETERNITY

Time, for Wieman, is the central category. We find, however, that it is not mechanical or clock time that assumes the pivotal role. Rather it is time grounded in creativity. The understanding of time (or eternity) in Wieman's thought comes finally from the meaning and depth of experience (mysticism).

Mysticism

Art, esthetic experience, and mystic experience are the forms in which there are greater possibilities of recognizing richness in felt quality. These are seen in a kind of hierarchy, with fine art most easily examined and yet of relatively less worth. (Wieman notes that a masterpiece cannot compare in richness of experience to living with the child or woman one loves.) Every culture is interlaced with forms of experience very vaguely defined, yet rich in content of experienced quality: love, friendship, traditional festivals, worship, work, loyalty, patriotism, veneration of heroes or saints, myths, legends, and much else. With the stuff of this rich and imperfectly defined quality, the artist and esthete work. Their work brings a kind of definition or structure heretofore lacking. Cultures that are poor in the undefined structures lack the necessary raw materials which an artists must have to do his work. The richness is in the human experience of every-day life. The contribution of fine art is derivative from this and, though it makes its contribution, it is small compared to other sources.

Mystic experience has a greater contribution to make because the great mystic, as Wieman understands him, "is an originator of forms of thought and action in every-day life which are most rich in felt quality."[71] The great mystic is one in whom creativity reconstructs the organization of the mind, who produces from a relatively inchoate experience new structures; a gospel, a way of life more rich with love than the prevailing culture previously knew or permitted. It is interesting at this point to notice that Wieman describes the content of this mystic transformation using traditional Christian, as opposed to Oriental, mystical motifs.

> "This new way of life brought forth by creativity in transforming the mind of the mystic is more richly appreciative of the qualities of persons, situations, events, kinds of work, classes of people, in poverty, humility, sorrow, loss, and tragedy, in power, luxury, heroic achievement, splendid mastery, in scenes of nature, periods of history, and human destiny. Such mystics have opened the minds of men to what is blessed in the poor in spirit, in the meek, in those that mourn, and even in being reviled and persecuted for righteousness' sake. They have spoken of a new heaven and a new earth and have even claimed that they had a glimpse of it."[72]

The life so envisioned by the mystic is sometimes called the life of love. Wieman thinks this too narrow and inaccurate an expression. Rather it is a "way of life in which structures have been created, otherwise called meanings, which enable one consciously to experience and profoundly appreciate the qualities to be found in persons, in ways of life, and in all the world of things."[73] The significant point here is that the mystic

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[71] Ibid., p. 87 Some, not all mystics, says Wieman, are of this order.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

is the one who initiates (or in whom creativity initiates) the beginning of those structures which first in him, and then in his world, slowly and laboriously work transformations. What he sees, knows, understands, must be communicated to the thought forms and sensibilities of his time. In a progressive and deepening interchange and cooperation between individuals, the established cultural forms are transformed, though they are never able to depart very far from those of the culture in which they arise. Thus, to culture can be attributed the same properties of identity through change which were described in relation to matter and individuals.

The mystic experience has a meaning for knowledge as well as a significance for the transformation of society. The richness of his experience or vision always overflows the bounds of his present society and remains in part formless, ineffable, and inarticulate. Though his understanding and expression fail, yet it gives him a sense of "glory, love and beauty beyond his power to grasp." This sense of the beyond is not an illusion, but rather a testimony that beyond all present forms, or reach of the mind, are in truth other forms of appreciative awareness yet to be created and as yet beyond the "capacity of any forms presently accessible to the human mind."[74] No single life, no generation, can appropriate the full richness of which the mystic has a foretaste, which he in part originates. "To carry this beginning to completion would require a new language, new institutions, new habits and customs, and a new culture fit to contain

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[74] Ibid., p. 88

this increase in beauty and love."[75] The mystic and, hopefully, his generation with him, become moments in a larger, longer, deeper transformation. His vision of the possible fulness of that transformation gives him a sense of the "glory which might be."

Mysticism and Eternity

Since his experience has been described as overflowing the boundaries of present knowledge and meaning, the mystic may likely think he is experiencing eternity.[76] This is, says Wieman, a very natural illusion, and, if eternity were defined as the potentiality of all the beauty, love, and glory yet to be attained in time, it is no illusion at all. "Eternity" in its religious usage suggests what might be experienced: wonder, mystery, and bliss. Thus it is often used by the mystic to describe his experience. But it is meaningless to speak of eternity in any sense which would indicate that there is an ultimate structure of reality which the human mind can never know. An unknowable structure in the sense of not being related to the cognitive powers of the human mind is contradictory and meaningless. There are structures yet to be discovered, but they can be designated as structures only in the sense that the human mind can in time think them and find data conforming to them. Whatever, then, is to be designated as eternal will not be out of time or beyond time, but rather the depth or

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[75] Ibid., p. 89

[76] Wieman is aware of the dilemma involved in language at this point. If the mystic's experience overflows present possible structures of meaning, he faces the decision of being silent or of using symbols which cannot describe what he is experiencing.

richness possible of appropriation in the present.

Time - The Inescapable Dimension

The present cannot be conceived apart from the past or future, any more than a smile is known apart from a face. The present is a "flow of structured quality" varying greatly in richness of quality. In one instance the structure may extend to years or centuries as when one speaks of the modern period as against the ancient. In another instance the "present" may be limited to fractions of a second. It may be bare of felt meanings or so rich with them that one loses the sense of time and describes the experience as an entry from time into eternity.[77] Whether these periods are maximum extensions or minimum contractions depends on the structure which "holds the attention and determines the magnitude of the content of what is called the present."[78]

All of the past of which one is aware is included in the present and can be found only in the present as one's awareness occurs always in the present. The past changes in two respects: events of the past are receding and changing in one's view of them, and the total structure joining past and present events continually reconstructs the past by the creativity operative in human experience. Thus creativity gives different meaning and character to the events of the past.

The future is completely open; for Wieman there are no future events

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[77] Wieman says that this can never be more than a figure of speech, no matter how literal the individual may take his language to be.

[78] Ibid., p. 91

except in colloquial speech. What man anticipates of the future can be merely structures of possibilities which may or may not become actual. To speak of future events or existence,

> "is to use an idiom which is harmless enough if we understand that it should not be taken any more literally than the idiom which says the sun is in my eyes. The sun is not in my eyes. It is millions of miles away. So also there is not another world where events are occurring now and which will be repeated again in my experience when the future becomes the present."[79]

In summary, then, past, present, and anticipated future are all determined by structures which command attention and which, because they are abstractions, never exhaust or express the richness of concrete events in their fulness. Creativity[80] is always present (variably so as the present may be full or nearly empty) and is creative of meaningful time, just as it is creative of minds and the world experienced by minds. Creativity may be continually creative without implying cumulative advance. It is conceivable that for a time the additions of new structures would be overbalanced by structures lost. Cumulative creativity may enrich or impoverish experience. New structures may vivify and clarify the total content of quality in the growing system of structures, as when a forward move is made in the direction of universal love or there is enunciated a great commandment about love of God or neighbor. On the other hand, the relatively barren structures of an instrumental technology may be used

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[79] Ibid., p. 78

[80] The term "creativity" is, in Wieman's final work the successor to the earlier term "creative event." Both terms, with suitable reservations and qualifications, can be used to designate God. Creativity is the "ultimate constitutive structure of reality." Man's Ultimate Commitment, p. 91

and developed in such a way as to impoverish life. The difference between the one or the other in the course of history depends on man's ultimate commitment.

Human life has its highest meaning in achieving forms of thought and action which are as rich as possible in felt quality,

> "because the basic, constitutive, universal, and imperative need of human nature, unconscious as this need may often be, is for enrichment by way of creativity."[81]

The locus of the ultimate concern is in the present, not in a future existence. But it is a present striving for a fuller and richer present that may be. This richness or fullness may be characterized by such terms as love, beauty, productive and satisfying work, and all forms of appreciative awareness. The goal of life is determined by what is most satisfying to the whole being of man, and that goal involves the achievement of the "richest possible content of felt quality in the structures of thought and action by which we conduct our daily lives."[82] These may not be achieved purely and simply by human striving. They are dependent, finally, upon a creativity which creates the human mind and the form of the world which the human mind can experience.

This creativity commands man's ultimate commitment because (1) it creates him, (2) saves him from destructive tendencies, (3) satisfies the constitutive need of man's nature when man meets the required conditions.

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[81] Ibid., p. 96

[82] Ibid., p. 97

The greatest need is commitment on man's part, in religious faith, to the transforming power which continuously works in him and in his world.

Finally, creativity is temporal.

> "This creativity cannot occur apart from time, hence is necessarily temporal. Therefore man's ultimate commitment should be given to what is temporal and not to eternity or the eternal. On the other hand, if 'eternal' refers to a reality which preserves its identity through all the changes of time but has no being apart from time, namely, the creativity here under consideration, then it can be said that 'the eternal' commands the ultimate commitment of man. But when such expressions as 'time and eternity' are used, the necessary distinctions should be kept clear. Creativity is eternal, not in the sense of being out of time or beyond time, but in the sense of being continuously creative of the emerging present."[83]

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[83] Ibid.

THE NEO-REFORMATION THOUGHT OF REINHOLD NIEBUHR

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The facts of Reinhold Niebuhr's intellectual development can be passed over with little direct comment, not because they lack significance but because they are already well known. That development has been chronicled by Niebuhr himself[1] and by numerous others.[2] What will be undertaken here is an analysis of those aspects of his thought which bear upon the problem of eternal life. The direction of the analysis can be anticipated by stating the principal headings for the sections of the study: Creation and Human Nature, The Meaning of History, History and Beyond, and Temporal and Eternal.

Niebuhr's Intellectual and Religious Heritage

Although it is certainly true that no brief summary can do justice to the breadth and complexity of his thought, one or two comments may be made about his general position without arriving prematurely at the conclusions we might expect from a more detailed analysis. Like Hocking, Wieman and Brightman, Niebuhr stands in the Protestant Christian tradition. He differs from them in that he has often held the role of representative Protestant He is more accurately described as an interpreter and defender in the contemporary American theological scene of that part of the Protestant spectrum which is variously characterized as "neo-orthodox" or "neo-Reformation." He is not a member of a philosophical

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[1] Reinhold Niebuhr's "Intellectual Autobiography" in Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social and Political Thought (edited by Kegley and Bretall, New York: Macmillan, 1956), p. 3

[2] See Hammar, G., Christian Realism in Contemporary American Theology; also Hofmann, Hans, The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956); Davies, D. R , Reinhold Niebuhr, Prophet from America (London: James Clarke & Co., 1945); Harland, Gordon, The Thought of Reinhold Niebuhr (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960); and others.

school or discipline, but an apologist for the Christian faith. He has said of his work in this regard,

> "My avocational interest as a kind of circuit rider in the colleges and universities has prompted an interest in the defense and justification of the Christian faith in a secular age, particularly among what Schleiermacher called Christianity's 'intellectual despisers.'"[3]

Niebuhr's work must be approached in a different manner from that of the authors just mentioned. Niebuhr's position grows out of and derives its essential content from the Christian revelation which is its center, and from the tradition which has interpreted that revelation to succeeding generations. To examine his thought requires also the question of how he has dealt with the tradition and what are the peculiar qualities of his understanding of the faith. Such questions open a veritable floodgate of possible ways to develop the analysis of Niebuhr's thought--too many, to be sure, to fit within the scope of the present study.

There are, however, certain themes in the Christian tradition which must be analysed as they bear upon the problem of eternal life. They can be suggested by asking a sequence of key questions about nature and destiny: Is man a creature of the natural world, or does he somehow transcend that world? If man is created by and in the image of God, how are we to account for the problem of his finitude or sin? More important, how are we to relate sin to man's destiny? If man is the object of the divine love and redemption, how does God deal with man's sin without destroying man's freedom? If man has a destiny beyond death, what can be said about the correlation of meaning between man's present "earthly" history and

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[3] Niebuhr, op. cit.

his existence beyond that history? What is God's gift, and what is man's responsibility as regards this other life or future destiny? Is man by nature "eternal" or is eternal life somehow "conferred" upon him by divine power? Finally, what validates the "truth" of the answers given to these questions?

There has been great variety in the answers given to these questions throughout Christian history, and, although some answers have been accepted as authoritative by particular historical institutions, no final or detailed answer has gained acceptance by Christendom as a whole. It is a dubious procedure to validate "truth" by an appeal to a majority opinion, so, though it may be instructive, it is not decisive to speak of a "Christian consensus" as a definition of the truth. To say, then, that Niebuhr stands within the Christian tradition and is one of its most powerful contemporary interpreters must not be understood as committigg him to a particular Christian position, but rather to place him within what Tillich calls the "theological circle"[4] and to make him a participant in the perennial debate or dialogue in which Christians engage as they seek deeper insight and understanding of their faith.[5] If there is no unanimity in particular answers, it must be noted that there is a formal wholeness or structure within which the dialogue proceeds.

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[4] Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, Vol. I (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1951), p. 8

[5] "There will always be differing Christian views as to the possibilities of human life in relation to God's suffering and forgiving love as it transforms our existence...Faith is guided by whatever understanding it can manage of resurrection, judgment, and eternal life. But the literal meaning of these final realities we cannot give." D. D. Williams, What Present-Day Theologians are Thinking (revised edition, 1951, New York: Harper and Brothers), p. 144

The dialogue goes on within schemata which can be generally characterized as "God's creative act at the beginning of history, the cross in the midst of history, and God's judgment and mercy over all of history."[6] Around the creation story cluster such symbols as the Imago Dei, the original innocence of man, the Fall and Original Sin. These interpret man's finite nature, freedom, and creaturehood. At the center of history will be found the anticipating prophetic messianism which expected one kind of Messiah and received another--the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection and Atonement. These interpret God's action on man's behalf in the person and work of Jesus Christ within history. God's judgment and mercy over all history are seen in the symbols of the eschaton, the Last Judgment and Eternal Life.

Niebuhr's Method

Niebuhr's thought is "dialectical," for to him the deepest insights about man, history, and reality are shot through with ambiguities. To the dismay, and sometimes the disgust, of rationalists and positivists who give a key role to logical consistency, Niebuhr elaborates his version of the Christian understanding of man's existence in terms which remain dialectical and paradoxical throughout.

> "Every effort to identify meaning with rationality implies the deification of reason. That such an identification represents idolatry and that the laws of reason and logic are incapable of fully comprehending the total meaning of the world, is attested by the fact that life and history are full of contradictions which cannot be resolved in terms of rational principles."[7]

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Niebuhr, Reinhold, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), p. 165

This does not mean, however, that logic has no service to render in the search for truth. There is no formal conflict between logic and truth. Logic eliminates contradictory assertions. Yet,

> "there is no resource in logical rules to help us understand complex phenomena, exhibiting characteristics which seem to require that they be placed into contradictory categories of reason. Loyalty to all the facts may require a provisional defiance of logic, lest complexity in the facts of experience be denied for the sake of premature logical consistency."[8]

While granting that the laws of logic are reason's guard against chaos in the realm of truth, Niebuhr takes his position with the "facts," which means that his real concerns are the drama of personal and historical life in the full range of their complexity, rather than the rigorous pursuit of systematic, rational thought. Though there are ontological implications in much of his writing, some of them explicitly stated, for the most part his thought is derived from the Scriptures and traditions of the faith in which he stands. His use of revelation, his sense of the dramatic character of the central events of the faith, and his conviction that meaning is often deepened and illumined by mystery, have caused Niebuhr to use mythic and symbolic language rather than rely exclusively upon rational categories.

It is impossible to establish a form that is ever fully adequate to express the non-rational. Yet myth may act as the key to the understanding of history and society in areas where reason reaches a terminus beyond which it cannot go without becoming absurd. Myth is supra-historical, supra-rational and reveals, from beyond the boundary of history and reason,

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[8] Ibid., p. 263

the meaning which they are inadequate to articulate. Thus the great themes of myth will be the beginning and the end; the implications of creation for the Creator and creature; the Fall and the estrangement of man from God; the final consummation of society and history in the termination and fulfillment of history by God. The value and truth of myth cannot be separated from the function of myth in the God-man relationship. Myth is the vehicle of a depth of revelation which is more dynamic and dramatic than the cognitive function or "pure reason" could ever be. It is more crucial because it is about realities that are at once essential and existential. Myth illumines meanings which are beyond reason's reach and conveys God's truth to His creatures in living and decisive terms.

> "If the trust of faith merely becomes a 'fact' of history, attested by a miracle, or validated by ecclesiastical authority, it no longer touches the soul profoundly. If it is made into a truth of reason which is validated by its coherence with a total system of rational coherance, it also loses its redemptive power. The truth of the Christian Gospel is apprehended at the very limit of all systems of meaning. It is only from that position that it has the power to challenge the complacency of those who have completed life too simply, and the despair of those who can find no meaning in life."[9]

CREATION AND HUMAN NATURE

Niebuhr's doctrine of man is drawn from sources which include cultural, historical and psychological analysis of the human situation and the insights Niebuhr finds in Christian revelation. Experience and faith interpenetrate, confuse, and clarify each other on all levels of man's existence. Niebuhr is convinced that presuppositionless inquiry into the human

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[9] Niebuhr, Reinhold, Faith and History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. 170

situation is impossible, just as it is impossible to interpret the nature or destiny of man purely in terms of revelation alone. The schemata adopted for the Gifford Lectures[10] indicate the way Niebuhr uses the interplay of faith and experience. In very braod strokes he sketches in the major spiritual dilemmas and intellectual problems which have bedeviled Western man and which have, from the time of the pre-Socratics to the present day, remained a perplexity. As Niebuhr engages in this historical recountal his position, which is implicit throughout, assumes a definite, if not a "systematic," form. By recalling the way Niebuhr interprets a number of myths which surround the biblical story of Creation, light will be thrown on his understanding of human nature and the meaning of human existence.

Creation Ex-nihilo

The doctrine of Creation provides one facet of Christianity's unique understanding of human nature. Though our interest is directed to eschatology or last things, the doctrine of Creation is important for the symbolic meaning it gives to the other "terminus" of man's existence. Much of Greek thought, says Niebuhr, sees creation as a process by which Mind gives form to a pre-existent matter. Christianity affirms that God is both vitality and form, is Creator of an essentially good world which He created ex-nihilo.

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[10] _____, The Nature and Destiny of Man (Two Volumes, 1941 and 1943)

> "The assertion that God created the world out of nothing is a logically-absurd concept which calls attention to the limits of rationality in dealing with the mystery of origin. It is not in conflict with the slogan of science: ex nihilo nihil fit. For that slogan emphasizes the chain of natural causation within the temporal process, while the Christian concept of creation ex nihilo calls attention to the fact that the temporal process is not self-explanatory, though there are always particular explanations for particular events."[11]

The doctrine is supra-rational and turns man's attention toward the Ground of his and all life, beyond process to ultimate source. The doctrine corrects mistakes in rationalistic and idealistic cosmologies which presuppose some unformed stuff, some realm of chaos, which nous fashions into order. To "fashion" is not to create. The biblical doctrine derives both the formless stuff and the forming principle from a source which it conceives to be both logos and creative will, both the principle of form and the principle of vitality.[12] Thus the biblical view sees the divine power as sovereign over the whole created world.

The doctrine of Creation ex nihilo places its emphasis upon mystery, calls

> "attention to a depth of reality where mystery impinges upon meaning...establishes a necessary distinction between the derived and underived world...agrees with classical, as against modern, thought that the temporal process is not self-derived, self-explanatory or self-fulfilling."[13]

Neither on the level of nature or history, nor from an examination of man's

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[11] _____, Faith and History

[12] _____, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. I, p. 135

[13] _____, Faith and History, pp. 46-47. See also The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. I, pp. 132-133

personal or social life, can sufficient immanent self-explanation be provided; all levels of life point beyond themselves to a more ultimate source in which alone the final meaning can be found. For Niebuhr this source is the God of Christian faith who is transcendent Creator and Sovereign of all that He has made.

Imago Dei

Like Augustine, Pascal and Kierkegaard, Niebuhr interprets the Christion doctrine that man is created in "the image of God" to mean that man is related to the will of a personal God. He rejects any interpretation which would assign man's uniqueness simply to his rational faculty. Man's chief dignity is his freedom, his indeterminate capacity to transcend the structures of nature, history, and self and to stand in an I-Thou relationship to his Creator. The failure of man is occasioned, not by the failure of his knowledge but by the corruption of his will--by his God relationship turning into one of rebellion or the subtle pretensions that man, himself, is God.[14]

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[14] One of the recurring themes in Niebuhr's thought concerns the way in which man's freedom, which is a mark of his creation in God's image, is corrupted by his pride or pretension that he is creator rather than creature. Niebuhr repeatedly indicts modern man for doing this. A typical passage from his Faith and History reads:

"Man not only creates the historical realm through his freedom, but he is himself subject to development through history because historical processes extend the power of his freedom indeterminately. It was this extension of human powers which modern culture recognized more clearly than any previous culture. It was so impressed by its discovery that it arrived at the false conclusion that the indeterminate extension of human capacities would eventually alter the human situation. It would emancipate man from his ambiguous position as both creature and creator of history and enable him to become the unambiguous master of historical destiny." pp.15, 16.

Though he is created in God's image, man is also--and always--a creature of nature and history. His transcendence over nature and history is not a severance from them. A man's creatureliness within nature or history is not to be deprecated, for, though he is a creature, creation is good. In the biblical view the contrast between the created world and the Creator, between its dependent character and His freedom, is absolute.[15] Yet this contrast never means that the created world is evil purely as a result of its limitations and the finitude of its various types of existence. "It is never a corruption of an original divine unity and eternity, as in neo-Platonism; nor is it evil because of the desire and pain which characterize all insufficient and dependent life, as in Buddhism."[16] Man's dignity and his freedom are suggested by his creation in the Creator's image, his creatureliness by the fact that, neither by taking thought nor by moral striving, can he escape the boundness or limitations of his existence.

> "In its purest form the Christian view of man regards man as a unity of God-likeness and creatureliness in which he remains a creature even in the highest spiritual dimensions of his existence, and may reveal elements of the image of God even in the lowliest aspects of his natural life."[17]

Original Sin and The Fall

Evil cannot be overcome in any final sense, either by man's moral striving or by the increased use of his rational powers. Man exists on

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[15] When we discuss God's relation to history we will find that this "absolute contrast" is only one strain in Niebuhr's thought and that the dominant theme will be one in which the relation is "dialectical."

[16] Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. I, p. 169

[17] Ibid., p. 150

a precarious boundary line between nature and spirit; his anxieties as well as his pride continually tempt him to absolutize whatever fragmentary securities he manages to achieve. Both the doctrine of Original Sin and the myth of the Fall attempt to express that, while sin is "inevitable" and "universal," it is not necessary. Man's sin is conditioned upon his freedom, and it is impossible for him to escape the responsibility for his actions.

> "The Christian doctrine of Original Sin with its seemingly contradictory assertions about the inevitability of sin and man's responsibility for sin is a dialectical truth which does justice to the fact that man's self-love and self-centeredness are inevitable, but not in such a way as to fit into the category of natural necessity. It is within and by his freedom that man sins."[18]

Thus the myth of the Fall universalizes, and at the same time individualizes, the theme of man's revolt against God. For Niebuhr this is not to be taken to be literal historical truth as in Christian orthodoxy, but rather as a myth that accurately symbolizes the character of man's moral existence and the source of much historical evil. Man's failure lies, according to the Bible, not so much in the finiteness of his intelligence as in the vanity of his imagination.

What is the consequence of the Fall according to the Christian understanding of human nature? What is lost or corrupted by it? What remains

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[18] Ibid., p. 264, and "Here is the absurdity in a nutshell. Original Sin, which is by definition an inherited corruption, or at least an inevitable one, is nevertheless not to be regarded as belonging to his essential nature and is not outside the realm of his responsibility. Sin is natural for man in the sense that it is universal but not in the sense that it is necessary." Ibid., p. 242. Niebuhr's position agrees with much of Kierkegaard's analysis of anxiety as a pre-condition of sin (Concept of Dread).

of man's essential nature? The history of the debate is long and bitter.[19] For Niebuhr all elements of man's nature (i.e., reason, will) are corrupted in the sense that no one is immune. Man has a capacity to respond to the natural law and create tolerable harmony within community, and he can also cultivate such virtues as faith, hope, and love. In his heart he knows that the former is never an adequate expression of the perfection his conscience prompts him to seek, and that very prompting suggests man's obligation to the latter, or theological, virtues.

It is not necessary for the present study to follow out the doctrine of sin in Niebuhr's thought in any great detail, and certainly not in the proportion that the doctrine assumes in Niebuhr's total thought. What is important here is the recognition of the universality of man's sin, the uniformity of the condition from which man must be redeemed, and, as we shall eventually see, the impossibility of man's achieving his own salvation. As regards the criticism that the "inevitability of sin" cuts the nerve of any significant action and leads to complacency, Niebuhr maintains that the larger problem is man's inordinate self-righteousness to which his partial virtues tempt him. His appeal here is not so much to revelation as to an honest self-examination which will seldom find purity of heart, and which will be led eventually to ask with St. Paul,

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[19] There is a particularly wide gulf between Catholic and Reformation thought on the subject. The former maintains that man lost the "superadded gifts" but retained his natural powers. Reformation thought understood the Fall in more radical terms, and interpreted man's nature as totally corrupt, retaining little that was discernible of the image of God.

"Who will deliver me from the body of this death?"[20] It is this aspect of Niebuhr's interpretation on the nature of man--this perennial and persistent ambiguity--which rules out any simple progression or cumulation of virtue that might bring him to a future utopia within history, or a salvation beyond history achieved by human prowess alone.

THE MEANING OF HISTORY

No other concern has so dominated his thought as has the search for the meaning of history. His interpretation of history has consistently made the biblical idea of the sovereignty of the Creator God over man's historical destiny its central category. It is Niebuhr's conviction that the Christian faith understands more clearly and fully than any other possible alternative interpretation, the meaning of universal history in all its paradoxes and complexities. Christian faith alone has the key given by divine source: the Christ event or the divine self-disclosure which illumines history in all its depths. This event provides at once the vantage point of judgment upon any segment of history and the hope of redemption which history in itself cannot provide. The unity of history as conceived by the Christian faith derives from the assurance that all historical destiny is under the sovereignty of the creating and redeeming God. The complexity of that history is grounded in the moral ambiguity which characterizes every moment or segment of it.

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[20] Niebuhr, Faith and History, p. 121f

> "Thus biblical faith, which begins with a sense of mystery, embodying meaning, and moves to a sense of meaning in history which contains perplexity and ambiguity, ends by seeing human history perpetually, and on every level of its achievements, in contradiction to the divine."[21]

What we confront in Niebuhr's thought is more than an interpretation of history; it is a theology of history. The key to history is the cross, and the cross is a symbol of the relation of time to eternity. God in Christ enters time to fulfill what finite man vainly sought to achieve by his own striving. Ironically, it was at a peak in man's achievement, the period which produced Roman law and Jewish religion, that man encounters the eternal "humbling itself for time's sake."

> "But eternity has demonstrated in time, by its own sacrifice, that it could be eternally and completely satisfied in itself, yet chooses not to be so satisfied and wills to fulfill itself in time. Therefore the nature of time has become wholly different, since it can now have an unrestricted fulfillment in eternity, in this paradoxical-dialectical relationship, and only there."[22]

The action of the eternal, then, has resolved in ultimate terms the question of the meaningfulness of time, resolved it in a way that naturalism or mysticism never could. Here is a solution which with the substitution of "God in Christ" for "eternal" and "finite man sinfully rejecting God" for "time," we have the heart of both the time-eternity problem and the center of the Christian faith. Thus his theology of history finds its principle of interpretation as well as its solution in the Christian faith.

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[21] Ibid., p. 144

[22] Hofmann, op. cit., p. 118

It is a history and a super history at once, a history full of tension between the Creator and His creatures, for the history of man's relationship to God is not a dialogue so much as it is a contest, and it is the nature of man's freedom that heightens and intensifies the struggles of history.

Freedom and Selfhood

The term "self-transcendence" occurs with great frequency in Niebuhr's writing. It denotes a uniquely human capacity, one whereby the self transcends both the natural processes around it and its own reason at work within.

> "There is a dimension of human existence which makes all purely rationalistic interpretations, not to speak of purely naturalistic ones, inadequate. That is the dimension of the eternal in the human spirit, which reveals itself in the capacity of the self to transcend not only the processes of nature but the operations of its own reason, and to stand, as it were, above the structures and coherences of the world."[23]

It is this capacity or power which gives the radical freedom to the self,[24] a freedom which is the source of the dignity and the pathos of man. His freedom makes possible the heights of achievement and the greatest degradation, of creative powers and human destructiveness. The freedom of the

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[23] Niebuhr's "Intellectual Autobiography" in Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social, and Political Thought, p. 17

[24] "History is the fruit and proof of man's freedom." Niebuhr, Faith and History, p. 55

[2]The dialogues, in which the self is involved, are transmuted into dramas whenever they precipitate action. These actions are formed into dramatic patterns which constitute a web of destiny for the individual, determining subsequent actions and dialogues. These dramatic patterns may extend to various communities, family, local or national. The dramatic patterns are historic realities in which freedom and necessity are variously compounded." _____, The Self and the Dramas of History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), p. 44.

self poses one side of the drama of history and superhistory, for it means that man may not only violate the structures of reason which regulate the human community, but he may reject the love of God which seeks to redeem him. The self cannot find its norm in either nature or reason, but only, and finally, in the norm of agape. That mankind continually rejects both the norms of reason and the appeal of love indicates that the locus of his primary difficulty is not in his ignorance either of the truth or the good, but in a recalcitrant will. His radical freedom, then, poses the central dilemma and necessitates, if he is to be understood, that the analysis of his selfhood be stated in terms of his dramatic-historical environment.

The immediate observation that it is possible to make about the self caught in the "dramas of history" is that it is anxious and insecure. Being a creature of nature, yet transcending nature, man knows himself to be both contingent and free. His awareness of his finitude heightens his insecurity and he uses his freedom abortively in the effort to overcome his anxieties.

> "In short, man, being both free and bound, both limited and limitless, is anxious. Anxiety is the inevitable concomitant of the paradox of freedom and finiteness in which man is involved. Anxiety is the internal precondition of sin. It is the inevitable spiritual state of man, standing in the paradoxical situation of freedom and finiteness."[25]

In his condition of freedom and his consequent sin, man needs the image of an original righteousness by which to assess his distance from

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25 _____, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. I, p. 182 We recall from an earlier discussion of the Fall that sin is related to freedom and not to finitude; sin cannot be attributed to a defect in man's essence. Sin is possible by the fact of freedom but does not follow from it by necessity.

the good, not a restored reason to guarantee ultimate truth. He needs to be redeemed from his sins and to have his estrangement from the Ground and Source of his life bridged. He cannot fulfill this need. The central fact about the self is its dependent character. The great affirmation of the Christian faith is that through the person, work and promise of Jesus Christ the restoration of the self can take place. It was Cullmann, I believe, who first used the striking metaphor which placed Christ at the "center of history," or, to use his word, at the "mid-point."[26] It is no less true of Niebuhr that Christ is the central event from which all history is to be interpreted.

History, the Christ and the Cross

If the key problem for man's life is that of bridging the gap between his estranged finite existence and the infinite God, the solution to that problem is found for the Christian faith in the person of Jesus Christ. Though man lives amidst evil, suffering and all the other contradictions of his mortality, he lives with a sense of meaning which transcends those contradictions and ambiguities, with a poise which derives in large measure from his confidence in an ultimate victory which he does not have to win, but which has been won for him. Christ is the key to the victory and the source of that confidence. The Christian is persuaded that the suffering of Christ represents the suffering and redemptive love of God which invades and gives meaning to history. The doctrine of the Atonement

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[26] Cullmann, Oscar, Christ and Time (translated by Floyd V. Filson, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950), p. 121f

"is an absolutely essential presupposition for the understanding of human nature and human history."[27] Niebuhr admits to his own growing sense of the centrality of the Cross as his thought matured, a movement from a position which saw in the Cross little more than the necessity of paying a high price for one's ideals, to an understanding which took it to be a symbol of ultimate reality.[28] That ultimate reality, though never perfectly understood, is seen in the revelation of the suffering love of God who takes the contradictions and frustrations of man's self-corrupted freedom into Himself and overcomes them. The love revealed in the Cross judges man in all his sins, even as it reconciles and upholds the contrite. Thus, at the Cross the final realities of human and historical significance meet: the powers of evil in all their terror and the greater and more wonderful power of redeeming grace. However, the Cross was from the beginning, and continues to be, a "scandal," a "stumbling block." When the Apostle Paul attempted to "preach the Cross" he found it to be "foolishness" to the Greeks. Niebuhr's theology was itself foolishness to American liberalism during the thirties. One of the central issues in that debate was his insistence upon the Cross as the key to the understanding of history. He recalls the issues of that struggle in an article about the development of his thought.

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[27] Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. I, p. 148

[28] _____, Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic (Chicago: Clark and Colby, 1939), p. 85

> "In seeking to persuade the modern mind that Christianity is respectable and intelligent, the liberals sacrificed most of the essential positions. Christ was transmuted into the good man Jesus, who could charm all men to become good as he was. The classic Christology of the God-man was repudiated, though innumerable reservations sought to hide the repudiation. It was not recognized that this absurd doctrine of the God-man Christ contains the whole essence of the Christian faith--its belief that God transcends history and yet makes himself known in history; that history measured by Christ is tragic and ends tragically for it crucifies Christ; that only God is able to resolve the conflict between what man is and what he ought to be, a conflict in which all men stand; that God cannot do this by simply wiping out history and transmuting it into eternity, but by redeeming history, but that the redemption of history involves God's taking upon himself the inevitable violation of that law."[29]

The Cross is for Niebuhr, as for Paul, the final revelation of God and His relation to man; it is both "wisdom" and "power." It is a power which overcomes the contradictions and evils of history and a wisdom which undergirds the final mystery and meaning of life and history.

> "The Wisdom apprehended in Christ finally clarifies the character of God. He has the resource of mercy beyond His law and judgment but He can make it effective only as he takes the consequences of his wrath and judgment upon and into Himself."[30]

Here, then, is a divine mercy which does not abrogate the justice of God so much as it symbolizes the freedom of God over any form of law, including His own. A recent interpreter of Niebuhr's thought has pointed out how important for the understanding of man's experience in history are the relations between justice and love as they are correlated in the Atonement.

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[29] _____, "Ten Years that Shook My World," The Christian Century, (April 26, 1939), p. 544

[30] _____, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II, p. 55

> "It is of the utmost importance for our study, that we note that the dialectical relation between love and justice finds its ultimate basis in the 'wisdom' of God, in the relation between the mercy and the justice of God. The justice of God is the love of God acting against the corruptions of His order. To seek to have love without justice is to sentimentalize the whole Gospel. But the justice of God does not exist apart from His love; its ultimate dimension is the unfathomable depth of a love which takes into itself our violations of that same law of love. Such is the theological rootage of Niebuhr's ethics."[31]

Such a relationship between justice and love means that there is a vantage point of judgment from which the failures of history can be meausred, as well as a source of mercy by which the faithful already see that the process of redemption has begun.

To affirm this process of redemption as an article of faith is one thing; to relate that faith to "secular" or non-Christian thought is quite another. We note, for instance, that justice and mercy are rooted "beyond history" and are "revealed" in history; that the ultimate culmination and fulfillment of history somehow comes from that same "beyond," and remain objects of religious faith rather than items in historical knowledge. We begin to see that Christology is not only the central category in Niebuhr's thought, but that it is also the source of his deepest problems. Unless the Cross of Christ does in fact illumine the whole relation between the estranged, finite and historically-conditioned sinful existence of man and the Absolute Goodness and power of God, Christian faith as well as its preaching, to use Paul's celebrated word, is "vain."

The work of apologetics, then, is not only to relate history to that which is "beyond history," but to interpret the Gospel accepted by the

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[31] Harland, op. cit., p. 118

faithful to those who are outside the faith in terms which they can find meaningful. Those who stand within the Christian tradition accept the revelation which is its center. This dependence upon revelation would seem to disengage the faith from any dialogue with man's knowledge derived from his reason or experience. Niebuhr will agree to no such radical breach. Revelation adds to and fulfills the knowledge man gains from his experience in history. The meaning, therefore, of the Christ as apprehended by faith becomes a new source of wisdom for the interpretation of human experience; an added and confirming insight rather than a contradiction to man's personal experience and the wisdom of history. Stated another way, the truth of the Gospel cannot be derived from human experience, even though it is often validated and confirmed in experience.

> "Revelation does not remain in contradiction to human culture and human knowledge. By completing the incompleteness, clarifying the obscurities and correcting the falsifications of human knowledge, it becomes true wisdom 'to them that are called.'"[32]

Niebuhr's reference here to "them that are called" stands as a reminder that, though there is a continuity between the knowledge of experience available to all and the truth revealed in Christ given to the faithful, there is no simple correlation between them. The truth revealed in Christ is apprehended inwardly by faith: it is a gift of "grace," best received by an attitude of contrition and trust.

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[32] Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II, p. 67

> "The Cross is neither wisdom nor power to those who accept it gracelessly. The 'wisdom' of God is not appropriated apart from the 'power' of God. There is an intimate relation between the content and the mode of knowing. The wisdom of the Cross is known only to him who appropriates it in contrition and trust. To him who thus apprehends the truth of Christ, the wisdom of God is also the power of God; the disclosure of the meaning of life carries with it resources for the fulfillment of that meaning."[33]

The Cross then stands within and points beyond history. It is the vantage point of judgment on history and the image of a transcendent mercy which redeems history. Its paradox consists in part that while it resolves, it at the same time heightens, the tensions between history and the transcendent Sovereign who is within and beyond history. In such a schema the focus must eventually shift from the Cross that is central in history to the culmination of history at the "last day," where the victory over history which has been won "in principle" finally will be won "in fact." History in the interval between the Christ and the eschata will, therefore, be interpreted as "interim history."

History as Interim

While it is true that Niebuhr's thought is dominated by concern for history, history is never the final category. The whole range and complexity of history, as well as the ground of meaning within it, is illumined not by itself, but by something which transcends it. Man's present

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[33] Harland, op. cit., p. 119 (Niebuhr shows the influences of Kierkegaard's religious epistemology. He acknowledges his indebtedness in several key passages in The Nature and Destiny of Man.)

history may be likened to a stage on which he participates in a drama. The drama is given meaning by a backdrop which tells him where he is and what, finally, the drama is about. So history is played out in the face of its "eternal" backdrop. History after the center of "mid-point" is an interim. The concept of the interim is part of the biblical schemata which move from an interpretation of the Creation and Fall by way of prophetic messianism to the Christ who discloses the sovereignty of God, ushers in the Kingdom, and reveals the meaning of life and history. The biblical view acknowledges that, though the redemptive work of Christ makes it possible to say that the Kingdom has come, it must also be said that the Kingdom will come. Sin is everywhere evident; human existence continues to be morally ambiguous: there has been a revelation of the meaning of history without history's reaching its culmination. Thus history is an interim between the divine disclosure of the meaning of life and history in the first coming of Christ and the fulfillment of that meaning when He shall come again at the "last day." The interim contains a perplexing mixture in which there are partial realizations of the ultimate meaning of history and perennial contradictions to it. These contradictions are never fully overcome and history remains ambiguous to the end; it remains, therefore, under the judgment of history's only final norm--the revelation of perfect love seen in Jesus Christ. Thus man's norms for history must always be challenged by the perfect norm of suffering and redemptive love which the Cross represents. His approximation of that perfection and his rebellion against love's demands constitute the

essential struggle which gives history its pathos and glory. Man's partial goodness must remain under the scrutiny of a commanded perfection which it will perennially, though not of necessity, fail to achieve during history's interim.

> "History, after Christ's first coming, has the quality of partly knowing its true meaning. Insofar as man can never be completely in contradiction to his own true nature, history also reveals significant realizations of that meaning. Nevertheless, history continues to stand in real contradiction to its true meaning, so that pure love in history must always be suffering love. But the contradictions of history cannot become man's norms, if history is viewed from the perspective of Christ."[34]

Such an interpretation, which places the immediate "interim" world with its ambiguities and complexities against the background of a super-history, means for Niebuhr that all the facts of human existence are illumined. The depth of man's moral ambiguity has its final symbol in the fact that the Christ is crucified in history: a revelation by innocent suffering not only of the deepest moral problem, but one which becomes the answer to that problem. The same event symbolizes the cruel sin of men and the redeeming love of the God who overcomes the contradictions and takes upon Himself the sins of the world. For Niebuhr, this "apparent" weakness of a suffering Messiah becomes the validation of the ultimate dimension of the divine sovereignty. There is a power in this weakness which, when laid hold upon in the relationship of faith, provides the possibility of indeterminate renewals within history. It remains, however, a fragmentary history even to the end--one in which the meaning disclosed at its center is never in

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[34] Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II, p. 51

any final terms fulfilled until the end.

> "The problem of the meaning of history is always the problem of the meaning of life itself, since man is a historic creature involved, and yet not involved, in the flux of nature and time, but always involved in a false solution of his predicament."[35]

HISTORY AND BEYOND

We have noted the "interim" character of history and Niebuhr's insistence that for Christian faith history is a meaningful process which, nevertheless, neither yields nor fulfills its own meaning. He maintains that just as the finite mind cannot comprehend that which is the final source of the fulfillment of history, just so it can never know the nature of that fulfillment. Biblical symbols for the "end" of history must be taken seriously, yet not literally.[36] In no other set of symbols have we a clearer demonstration of Niebuhr's concern with history as the struggle between good and evil. The end of history represents at once the redemption and fulfillment of history--the final victory of good over evil. The biblical understanding of "last things" illumines the perennial problems within history and points to their solutions by a divine action which is within and beyond history. In Niebuhr's use, these biblical symbols are important for his analysis of the meaning of history rather than as an attempt to delineate any precise way last events will take place. The principal meaning of each symbol can be briefly sketched.

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[35] _____, Faith and History, p. 140

[36] The chief symbols for the "end" of history include the Antichrist, the second coming of Christ, the Last Judgment, and the Resurrection.

The Symbols of the End

The Antichrist, herald of the end, is a symbol which challenges all utopian schemes in which history solves the problems of history and in which the future, as future, guarantees some form of increasing historical virtue or security. History will remain ambiguous and the Antichrist is a symbol of that ambiguity, even to the final culmination.

> "Closely related to this idea of the final evil at the end of history is the general anticipation of evils in the course of history, which believers will understand but by which the world will be taken unawares."[37]

The second coming of Christ is a biblical symbol which distinguishes the Christian hope from all forms of mystical or rationalistic other-worldliness by placing the fulfillment of history at the end of history rather than treating it as a separate history. It is relevant to historical forms and yet, by being placed at the end of history rather than as a point in history, it is distinguished from all forms of utopianism.[38]

The symbol of the Last Judgment means that the Christ who came into history will be its final judge: the norm, therefore, by which history

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[37] Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II, p. 316f "The final evil is thus dependent upon the final good. Either it consciously and explicitly defies the Christ, in which case it requires Christ as a cloak. The one form is the Antichrist of the sinners and the other, the Antichrist of the righteous. But in either case the force of the Antichrist, though parasitic and negative in origin, is so positive in effect, and so stubborn in purpose, that no force, immanent in history, is capable of encompassing its defeat. The Antichrist who appears at the end of history can be defeated only by the Christ who ends history." Ibid., p. 319

[38] This interpretation of the "end" of history as the fulfillment of history and yet not within history is a key part of Niebuhr's criticism of Marxian utopian schemes in which the fulfillment of the Marxian dream of a classless society amounts to a solution within history of the problems of history and the continuance of history in a classless society or golden age where evil has been overcome.

is judged has already appeared in history. The struggle between good and evil, the scope of which was revealed in the Cross, is ceaselessly a part of the essential content of all history, and the issues of that struggle will be adjudicated by the same Christ who was Very Man. Thus the final judge of men will be the same Redeemer who came in the form of man to save men. His judgments will be true and righteous altogether: His mercy will not obliterate the distinction between good and evil. History does not redeem itself by innate laws or processes of development. Even so, history contains already the "first coming" of a redeemer who will come again at the last day to be its judge.

> "Christ as judge means that when the historical confronts the eternal it is judged by its own ideal possibility, and not by the contrast between the finite and the eternal character of God. The judgment is upon sin and not finiteness...The idea of a 'last' judgment expresses Christianity's refutation of all conceptions of history, according to which it is its own redeemer and is able by its process of growth and development, to emancipate man from the guilt and sin of his existence, and to free him from judgment."[39]

What is significant for us in these symbols concerning the "end" of history as interpreted through Niebuhr's prior Christological commitments[40] is that the God who comes to man incarnate has not set aside the meaning

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[39] Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II, pp. 291-293

[40] The Christo-centric position Niebuhr holds is his as a matter of faith, a faith formulated before he embarked upon historical analysis and very influential in that analysis. We are never presented, in Niebuhr's thought, with an attempt to use historical analysis as a validation of this central item of the Christian faith, though his apologetics are often at pains to demonstrate that a historical analysis so rooted and grounded in the faith is superior to, and more intelligible than, the alternative possibilities available.

of man's humanity. The Lord who is Judge is the Son who redeems. The love revealed in the Cross will hopefully be met in the Last Judgment as the love which saves and bears with us. For all the mystery which must, by its very nature, surround the ultimate and "last" things, the Christian faith maintains that it is a mystery accompanied by hope. The suffering love of the Cross which, on its face, appears to be defeat, becomes a key to God's victory over history, as well as to His final victory in history. The Christian must ponder the possibility that the meaning of the Cross is to be found in God as well as in history: it is the strongest image available to man of God's victorious, though suffering, love. It points to ultimate meanings and depths which, while man is in history, will never be fully plumbed and provides the best illumination we have, not alone of the ultimate meanings beyond, but of the very present and relevant human experiences of despair, crisis and hope.

The Resurrection of the Body

The idea of the Resurrection of the Body belongs with those other symbols which usually accompany the treatment of the biblical doctrine of last things. Here it is separated and treated by itself, because it requires a more rigorous examination of Niebuhr's understanding of transcendence and freedom than do the other symbols. It is one thing to say that the symbol of the Last Judgment means that no historical judgment is final, or to say that the Antichrist serves as a reminder of the perennial struggle between good and evil and "that history cumulates rather than solves

the essential problems of human existence."[41] It is quite another matter to use the symbol of the Resurrection in this way. The locus of the reality it designates seldom bears on "present" historical or personal concerns in other than metaphorical ways and the claim we have on that reality is never more than the "assurance of things not seen." Resurrection is rightfully the last among the symbols of last things, just as it is the final affirmation in the Apostle's Creed.

We shall see, however, that Niebuhr will not allow a complete or radical discontinuity between history and "eternity." The continuity he affirms is to be found in the destiny of selves, in the meaning and significance of selfhood and its ultimate fulfillment. Interestingly enough, whereas he used the symbol of the Last Judgment to illumine present experience, we shall find him using present experience to give shape to the few hesitant affirmations he makes about the nature of the resurrection-life.

The where, what and how of the Resurrection are best left, Niebuhr thinks, clothed in mystery. Both the moral sentimentality of much modern Christianity and the literalistic conceptions of everlasting fire in fundamentalism have dissipated and discredited the meaning and significance of judgment or survival.

> "It is unwise for Christians to claim any knowledge of either the furniture of heaven or the temperature of hell; or to be certain about any details of the Kingdom of God in which history is consummated."[42]

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[41] Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II, p. 318

[42] Ibid., p. 294

Resurrection or Immortality

The Resurrection of the Body is an article of faith which must be proclaimed even though it is the biblical symbol at which the modern mind takes its greatest offense. Nor will Niebuhr accept the modern substitute of the immortality of the soul as a more plausible expression of the ultimate fulfillment of life. He admits that the idea of resurrection transcends the limits of the conceivable, but so does the idea of an immortal soul. Neither can really be conceived nor the conditions of their possibility entirely comprehended. In the matter of their relative conceivability, the unity of historical existence as an interaction of body and spirit,

> "makes it no more possible to conceive transcendent spirit, completely freed of the conditions of nature, than to conceive the conditions of nature transmuted into an eternal consummation. Either idea, as every other idea, which points to the consummation beyond history, is beyond logical conception."[43]

Nevertheless, the hope of the Resurrection embodies the very genius of the Christian understanding of the historical. It conceives of eternity fulfilling and not annulling the richness and variety which the temporal process has elaborated. It also bears testimony to the belief that there is no solution by any human power to the riddle of man's freedom and finitude in his historical existence. The final solution must come from God who alone has the power to bring this consummation. The Christian's faith

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[43] Ibid., pp. 294-295 In his Beyond Tragedy, Niebuhr puts the argument in similar terms. "It is no more conceivable that the soul should exist without the body than that a mortal body should be made immortal. Neither notion is conceivable because reason can deal only with the stuff of experience; and we have no experience of either a discarnate soul or an immortal body." Beyond Tragedy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), p. 291

that he will do so is grounded in the conviction that the God revealed in Jesus Christ is a redeeming God and, from His love, neither life nor death can separate us.

The Christian faith affirms the meaningfulness of history the more strongly by denying that its consummation can be brought about by human effort and achievement, or natural immanent processes of nature and history. Modern alternative views which assert the immortality of the soul often contain the assumption that the enduring power or goodness of man or the inevitable process of history can guarantee the consummation. Generally speaking, however, the concept of the immortality of the soul derives from various types of neo-Platonic thought which has had wide influence in Western culture, and which has often found itself at odds with the Hebraic thinking of the biblical literature. Neo-Platonism is not a view of the progressive fulfillment of history, but the negation of finitude. Pure spirit is conceived as an eternal principle that is corrupted by its individualization in time. Therefore, salvation is conceived as release from physical life and temporal existence. Thus history derives whatever (negative) meaning it has in the processes by which the good soul is liberated from the evil body.[44]

The Resurrection of the Body is a profound expression of the Christian world-view because it eschews the utopianism and progressivistic views on the one hand and, on the other, all forms of mystical and dualistic views that must negate history in the interest of sloughing off the evil body

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[44] This debate is not absent from the Bible. Niebuhr comments, "Hellenic and Hebraic conceptions of the afterlife wrestled with each other in the mind and soul of St. Paul; and his dictum, 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God,' belongs to the Greek side of the debate." Beyond Tragedy, p. 290. See also The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II, p. 298.

or gaining oneness with pure spirit. Christian faith affirms the unity of soul and body, and refuses to make the body the locus from which evil arises in the form of impulses of the flesh. Man is in and transcends nature; is a child of freedom and a creature of necessity; his life is shaped by natural contingencies and his character developed by his rising above natural necessities. Those philosophies are inadequate, therefore, that either lift man out of nature or make him identical with it. Man is in and yet transcends nature--a truth well expressed by the unity of body and soul. The dependence of the soul upon the body might suggest that the finiteness of the body is the chief source of corruption of the soul.

> "The root of sin is in spirit and not in nature. The assertion of that fact distinguishes Christianity both from naturalism, which denies the reality of sin, and from various types of mysticism and dualism, which think that finiteness as such, or in other words the body, is the basis of evil."[45]

The possibilities of a consummation beyond this life are conceived in terms of this unity upon which Christianity insists--a consummation that is possible not because the soul is immortal and the body is mortal, but because this human life, soul and body, is in and transcends the flux and, though a participant, is not entirely encompassed by the flux.

> "The fulfillment of life beyond the possibilities of this existence is a justified hope, because of our human situation, that is, because a life which knows the flux in which it stands cannot be completely a part of that flux."[46]

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[45] Niebuhr, Beyond Tragedy, p. 294 Niebuhr examines the way sensuality and selfishness (pride) are related and concludes, "Whether they are two types of sin or whether one is derived from the other, it is obvious that both are the fruits of the spirit and not of the flesh." Ibid., p. 295

[46] Ibid., p. 297

But it does not follow that man's transcendence is the source of the power that guarantees his survival. Man's hope is in God who must complete what remains incomplete in man's life, a process which requires that He deal with man's finiteness and his sin, with the contingencies of his physical nature and the corruptions that follow from the freedom of his spirit.

The idea of the Resurrection of the Body is superior to that of the immortality of the Soul, because it expresses not only the unity of body and soul, but also a more individual and a more social idea of human existence. The involvement in and transcendence over nature just described has its corollary in man's relation to history. He is conditioned by human history and is the product of the social forces environing his life. Most ideals of personal immortality are, Niebuhr notes, highly individualistic and therefore suspect. By interpreting the ultimate fulfillment without reference to the social process, the meaninglessness and final negation of that process is implied, for it is part of the "mortal" that must be sloughed off by the immortal soul. By contrast, the biblical idea sprang from a social hope of a Messianic kingdom that did not negate, but rather fulfilled, the social and historical process. The idea of individual survival among the Jews was conceived in such a way that the fruit of righteousness was a resurrection in which the individual participated in the ultimate triumph of Israel.[47]

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[47] Niebuhr assails Protestant Christianity for not conserving more of the social nature of salvation. He admits that the liberal idea of progress in history and the Marxian idea of revolution are justified protests against Protestant Christian individualism. Marxism and liberal progressivistic views are inadequate, however, for they do not take the idea of resurrection seriously enough. They expect the transformation of history without divine action and assume, too simply, some act of mind or will to usher in a perfected history.

The Christian tradition affirms the social character of the community of the faithful in history and beyond. Any religion, says Niebuhr, that thinks only in terms of individual fulfillment becomes trapped into thinking of the meaning of life itself in individualistic terms.

> "But man's body is the symbol of his organic relationship to the processes of history. Each life may have a significance which transcends the social process but not one which can be developed without reference to that process."[48]

The idea of resurrection, then, corrects those religions which are too individualistic in their conception of ultimate fulfillment, and expresses man's involvement in, as well as his transcendence over, the processes of history.[49]

If the body is the symbol of man's involvement in nature and history, it is also a mark of man's individuality. Nature produces types, species and genera. Human freedom produces individuals, and freedom derives from spirit. But here, reasons Niebuhr, in a sequence of arguments we shall return to for analysis, lies a trap.

> "Pure spirit is pure mind and pure mind is universal. Pure mind expresses itself in the universally valid concepts of mathematics and logic. These concepts are universal because they are forms without content."[50]

Thus the so-called "spiritual" religions, which may begin with an individualism that overlooks the social character of existence, end by losing that individuality of soul through its merging in some eternal or divine

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[48] Niebuhr, Beyond Tragedy, p. 299

[49] Liberals who believe in progress and radicals who hope for a classless society represent a secularization of this concept which sees and desires the good in history, but does not see that the ultimate good points beyond history.

[50] Niebuhr, Beyond Tragedy, p. 301

unity. Thoroughgoing mysticism (from which Niebuhr separates much Christian mysticism) regards individuality, egohood, as itself an evil. This sequence of arguments brings Niebuhr to his finest summary of the relation between the symbolic meaning of the Resurrection of the Body, History and Eternity.

> "To believe that the body is resurrected is to say, therefore, that eternity is not a cancellation of time and history, but that history is fulfilled in eternity. But to insist that the body must be resurrected is to understand that time and history have meaning only as they are borne by an eternity which transcends them. They could, in fact, not be at all without that eternity. For history would be a meaningless succession without the eternal purpose which bears it."[51]

TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL

The view of human nature and destiny thus far presented describes man as both in and out of nature and history. In Niebuhr's thought, transcendence is the key. Spirit implies freedom, and freedom means that man is never simply bound within the structures of nature. Freedom does not guarantee immortality, even as it stands in the spirit of man as a token of his belonging to a destiny beyond time and history. Thus the analysis of man's twofold nature finds him to be a participant in the two realms or orders, while it follows from this very dual quality or capacity that he is prevented from fully belonging to either realm. Man's destiny, then, is paradoxical in the sense that the two orders of his life, his present history and his ultimate fulfillment, must be somehow congruent. Niebuhr quotes with approval Baron von Hugel's dictum that the total abidingness

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[51] Ibid., p. 302

of God will not destroy our partial abidingness.[52] This involves us in the logical difficulty of asserting that eternity will embody, and not annul, finiteness,[53] an idea for which St. Paul sought an adequate metaphor when, after saying that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God,"[54] he still affirmed that the consummation given in the resurrection means not "to be unclothed, but clothed upon."[55] The two orders must be congruent even though their relationship is a mystery with which reason cannot deal. Despite the mystery, Niebuhr cautions against confusing the necessary restraints which must always attend the expression of the particulars of the Christian hope with uncertainty about the validity of the hope that, again in the New Testament language, "When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."[56]

Niebuhr's problem, then, is to relate these affirmations of faith to the traditional problems of time-eternity. He admits that the Christian faith is absurd from the standpoint of reason and logic. Yet he also says that all alternative solutions are more absurd. This is a negative way of saying that among competing views of relative coherence, the Christian

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[52] _____, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II, p. 297

[53] Jewish apocalyptic writings, which are in the background of New Testament conceptions, struggled with this same problem. They sometimes presented the consummation of history as occurring "before the end" when the resurrected just would usher in the millenium. Later apocalyptic conceived of the fulfillment and the end as coinciding, and in that event all limitations of nature and time "were believed to be transcended at the consummation." Ibid.

[54] I Corinthians 15:50

[55] II Corinthians 5:4

[56] I John 3:2

faith--or better perhaps, the biblical faith--is the most coherent.[57] Can we adjudicate this matter in such a way as to agree with Niebuhr's assertions concerning the adequacy of Christian faith against competing views? A more detailed analysis is required of his handling of the systematic problems involved if his claims are to be validated.

Niebuhr's Two Times

One can distinguish two uses of time in Niebuhr's thought. The first is natural time and represents the orderly sequences in nature and the movements of the heavens. This time is understood as the unconscious forward march of clock or calendar days and the organic processes in natural growth. Its great mark is that it passes, is constantly in movement, and can be characterized generally as the vast realm of ceaseless flux. In Niebuhr's mind this order of time is directly related to man's finitude. Man is a creature of his own epoch and within that epoch has only a limited amount of time. His life is soon gone or, in the biblical figure, "Life is as swift as a weaver's shuttle." The underlying anxiety in all men prompted by this order of time derives from the latent awareness all men have of an approaching and inescapable event of death. Each man knows, as Hamlet muses while contemplating Yorick's excavated skull, "To this favor we must come." The inevitability and the "democracy" of death do

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[57] "All the known facts of history verify the interpretation of human destiny implied in New Testament eschatology. Yet most of the philosophies of history, both ancient and modern, have sought to observe either one or the other aspect of history which biblical eschatology illumines." Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II, p. 319

not remove the anxieties it arouses. But to raise the issue of anxiety is to suggest the second order of time in Niebuhr's thought, an order which he often designates, depending upon the context, not as "time" but as "fredom" or "history" or "transcendence."

Time for man is different from time in nature.

> "Historical time is to be distinguished from natural time by the unique freedom which enables man to transcend the flux of time, holding past moments in a present memory and envisaging future ends of actions which are not dictated by natural necessity."[58]

At another place he affirms that, "Human freedom makes history into something more than natural time...the mystery of time underlies the mystery of history."[59] Like Augustine, Niebuhr repeatedly uses the capacity of memory as a symbol of man's transcendence.

> "Memory represents man's capacity to rise above, even while he is within the temporal flux. It proves that time is in him as surely as he is in time."[60]

Man's transcendence of time in his powers to remember and anticipate, plus his freedom which allows him to shape and reshape events, constitutes this second order of time. Niebuhr celebrates this order of freedom as the validation of man's superiority over natural contingency, and yet he

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[58] _____, Faith and History, p. 55 Niebuhr sometimes uses "time" as if it were the organizing principle of events. "Time is a succession of events. Yet mere succession is not time. Time has reality only through meaningful relationship of its successions. Therefore time is real only as it gives successive expressions of principles and powers which lie outside of it. Yet every suggestion of the principle of a process must be expressed in terms of the temporal process, and every idea of the God who is the Ground of the world must be expressed in some terms taken from the world. The temporal process is like the painter's flat canvass. It is one dimension upon which two dimensions must be recorded. This can be done only by symbols which deceive for the sake of truth." Beyond Tragedy, p. 5f.

[59] Ibid., p. 37

[60] Ibid., p. 18

is constantly critical of man's tendency to make the claim of absolute independence of any contingency. Again, paradoxically, man's strength is the source of his weakness; the capacity of which man can be justifiably proud is also the source of his inordinate pride. Using biblical figures, the creature, exulting in his partial freedom and activity, pretends to be the Creator.[61] This is man's greatest sin, that of pride, which absolutizes the relative and centers the self on itself. If the corollary of natural time is anxiety about death, that of man's history and freedom is the dread of judgment. The threat of natural time is that time runs out; the threat of history and freedom is that of meaninglessness and moral failure. Human nature exhibits a curious mixture of the two orders: man is a contingent creature of nature; he is a free spirit. Man is temporal, but not <u>just</u> temporal. He has, as Kierkegaard phrased it, "a door of his soul opening on the infinite."

<u>And Two Eternities</u>

When Niebuhr speaks of the eternal in contrast to the temporal, one gets the immediate and, as it turns out, premature impression that eternity is used in Platonic and neo-Platonic terms. It is that which is completely other than the temporal. The temporal is incomplete, partial, peripheral,

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[61] Niebuhr points out in particular how recent technological advances tempted men to believe they had the final clue to history. "The classical conception of time as a cycle of endless recurrences was finally overcome. Time was no longer a mystery which required explanation. It became the principle of interpretation by which the mystery of life was comprehended. History was no longer an enigma. It became the assurance of man's redemption from his every ill." <u>Ibid</u>., p. 2

relative, conditioned and a realm of flux and change. When he discusses man's nature or destiny, Niebuhr implies by these terms that eternity is their opposite, and therefore immutable, unconditioned, complete, final and unmoved. This Platonic eternity is implied not only in Niebuhr's discussion of man's finitude and creatureliness, but in his exaltation of the sovereignty and majesty of God. But Niebuhr cannot remain consistent with this Platonism because his biblical and dramatic interpretation of history is central to his real concerns. His is a position dictated more by existential questions than by formal ontological analysis. His problem becomes, as it must always be, the key problem when one asks the religious question concerning the relation between time and eternity, namely, the availability of God to His creatures. Greek thought implies a too radical disjunction between them, and the eternal is remote. Niebuhr is driven to a qualification of the relation which will solve the problem of God's availability. For Niebuhr the eternal is finally conceived not as immutable and undifferentiated being but as suffering and redemptive love. His "second" eternity is, in contrast to the Platonic strain in his thought, one that bears the temporal and remains in dialectical relation to it.

In his work, Christian Realism, Hammar has interpreted Niebuhr's thought in such a way that the dialectical interpretation of the relation between time and eternity is seen to be Niebuhr's central idea.[62] While it might be more accurate to locate the center of Niebuhr's thought nearer to the problem of man's self-transcendence or the depth of the moral problem

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[62] Hammar, op. cit., p. 249

in man's historical destiny, still it must be admitted that a dialectical tension pervades all the major categories of Niebuhr's thought. After an extensive study of the problem of transcendence in contemporary theology, Farley confesses that he finds the problem of the dialectical relation between time and eternity the most elusive part of Niebuhr's thought.[63]

While the case can be made from some of his passages about God[64] that Niebuhr holds the Platonic position which relates time and eternity by complete severance, the position most often encountered in his writing relates them by dialectic. Alternative views are rejected because they either identify[65] or separate time and eternity absolutely.[66] For Niebuhr, a dialectical relation between them establishes a relation and yet assures continual tension. The dialectic is a dialogue between God and the world, not a matter of occasional momentous interventions or miraculous acts and retreats. The relationship can be characterized as "being constituted by the direct relation of every moment of time to the eternal, or the transection

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[63] Farley, E., The Most High (dissertation submitted to Columbia University, 1958), p. 139

[64] "In the biblical view the contrast between the created world and the Creator, between its dependent and insufficient existence and His freedom and self-sufficiency, is absolute." (underline mine) The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. I, p. 169. Niebuhr makes the same point negatively by emphasizing the rational absurdity of the Christian idea of fulfillment wherein eternity embraces time. Faith and History, p. 137

The fact that he accepts the absurdity as the price one must pay, after finding that the alternatives fail to do justice to all aspects of human existence, does not hide his assumption that a consistently rational position will of logical necessity make time and eternity discontinuous.

[65] Liberalism is accused of losing the tension between time and eternity by reducing all the dimensions of history to the level of nature. Niebuhr, Faith and History, p. 137

[66] Platonism, orthodox supernaturalism and Barthianism imperil the time-eternity relation by losing all relation between the two.

of every moment by the eternal."[67] Eternity is therefore related to, and relevant for, time; their relationship sometimes suggesting immanence in which the eternal is the source, the ground, and the end of the temporal.

> "It (the eternal) stands over time in the sense that it is the ultimate source and power of all derived and dependent existence. It is not a separate order of existence...the eternal is the ground and source of the temporal."[68]

If the eternal bears the temporal, it is also true that the temporal reveals the eternal. Jesus' religio-poetic conceptions of life transmute the image of the impartiality of nature. To the humanist this impartiality represents nature's injustice and inability to support man's moral concepts. For Jesus it is a revelation of a divine mercy which "maketh the sun to shine on the just and the unjust." The conception here "is of a God who, in spite of His transcendence, does not negate the forces of nature but reveals Himself in them."[69] At other points Niebuhr speaks of the eternal as bearing time,[70] embracing and incorporating it,[71] or as being engaged in the temporal.[72] These are figures which seek to express the way in which time and eternity are related. If the content of the eternal is in dialectical relation to time, what does this mean concerning God?

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[67] Niebuhr, Discerning the Signs of the Times (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), p. 97 The final figure is one which Niebuhr takes from T. S. Eliot's The Rock.

[68] Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II, p. 299

[69] _____, Reflection on the End of an Era (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), p. 282 (underline mine)

[70] _____, Beyond Tragedy, p. 302 "...to insist that the body must be resurrected is to understand that time and history have meaning only as they are borne by an eternity which transcends them."

[71] _____, Faith and History, p. 137

[72] _____, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II, p. 94 "The God of Christian revelation is not disengaged from, but engaged in, the world..."

God in Eternity and in Time

There is a hidden element in God, the Deus absconditus, about the nature and content of which it is impossible to speak. The Deus revelatus, the God revealed in His creation, and supremely in the incarnation in Christ, is not the immutable and undifferentiated unity of neo-Platonism or of Oriental Mysticism. Rather, He is suffering love. Niebuhr's dialectic is not between the fixity of the unchanging forms of eternity and the ceaseless flux of time, but between the eternal or ever-redeeming love (Agape) and recalcitrant creatures which it seeks to win. To contemplate the eternal as here conceived involves not the destruction of all finite particularity but a redeemed temporality. It means, in other words, to see through eyes of faith the eternal and suffering love which bears the whole project of history. To say that it is seen through eyes of faith does not mean that it is seen there only, but it is seen there most clearly. One catches glimpses of this final meaning and fulfillment in the partial meanings of history.[73] These partial meanings must, to become most coherent, be placed in the general schema of the Christian interpretation in which they point beyond history, even as they give insight into history.

We have seen suggestions of two views of time and eternity in Niebuhr's thought. These imply a question concerning God's being and nature. Niebuhr has opened the door to the age-old question about whether God's participation in the temporal process involves Him in the flux or even in suffering. If time is borne by the eternal and the eternal is revealed

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[73] _____, Faith and History, p. 233. See also The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II, p. 56 and Discerning the Signs of the Times (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946).

as redeeming love in time, does this mean that the suffering of Christ on the cross represents suffering in the divine nature? The issue, then, becomes not only whether or not God suffers in history, but whether, recalling Brightman's doctrine of a finite God and Wieman's cosmic evolutionism, God changes and grows in His suffering. From the Platonic side of Niebuhr's thought it is unthinkable that God should exhibit changes and processes as these are understood in the temporal world. But there is the other aspect of his thought which makes it difficult to see how God can be in real relation--even one of tension or one in which He is seen as the ultimate reality on which all else depends--without that relation bearing some implications of His undergoing change. The problem, philosophically stated, is one aspect of the question of God's immanence and transcendence. The problem, says Niebuhr, consists in attempting to state in rational categories what cannot be so stated, but which is nonetheless assuredly the truth--a truth more adequately conveyed by Jewish-Christian myths than by reason.

> "The rational absurdity of the conception of a God who is at once immanent and transcendent arises only when the effort is made to transpose the original Jewish-Christian mythos of the creator and the creation into philosophical and scientific terms. In the creation myth God is transcendent in the sense that the potter is certainly above his clay and in a different category of existence. He is immanent in the sense that His creation is a revelation of His majesty and glory."[74]

At this point Niebuhr's thought is extremely difficult to analyze because he makes commitments in both directions and, having made them,

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[74] _____, Reflection on the End of an Era, p. 201

honors and defends them. His position has had a worthy forerunner in St. Augustine, and Niebuhr's final position shows great similarities to that of the Bishop of Hippo. Time is meaningful to God's experience--the temporal can be a meaningful part in the eternal--because the eternal holds the diverse moments of time together all at once. We recall Augustine's statement about God's years standing together as a day, even as a moment. So Niebuhr writes:

> "The divine consciousness gives meaning to the mere succession of natural events by comprehending them simultaneously, even as human consciousness gives meaning to segments of natural sequence by comprehending them simultaneously in memory and foresight."[75]

The problem of the "development" or "change" in God is thus obviated without the temporal having been annulled by a "timeless" eternal. To elaborate what this means for history and for the individual person, Niebuhr speaks of two dimensions in the relation of eternity to time. In one, eternity stands <u>over time</u> in the sense that it is its ultimate source and power; in the other, eternity stands <u>at the end</u> of time. The second dimension is required because the temporal order must have a <u>finis</u> "and eternity cannot be conceived as having a <u>finis</u>."[76] Niebuhr maintains that eternity "outlasts" time,[77] even though our efforts to picture the relationship being to "project a particular point in future time which will also be the end of time."[78]

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[75] _____, <u>The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II</u>, p. 299

[76] <u>Ibid</u>.

[77] Though he does not mean an abrupt ending of the world or the gradual ending of the world by the dissipation of its natural energies.

[78] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 300

History Seen from Above and from the End

These two dimensions of the relation of eternity to time result in two perspectives upon the meaning of history: one gives meaning to the passing events and the cumulative meaning in history; the other is a vantage point from which can be discerned those "qualities and meanings of history which seem to have absolute significance without reference to their relation to the continuum of history."[79] Insofar as man transcends history by his freedom, there are "tangents of freedom" which stand in direct relation to eternity. Niebuhr quotes von Ranke's famous dictum that each moment of time and history is equi-distant from eternity as representing only half of the truth,[80] for it misses the other dimension, namely, that history is a process which requires understanding of its totality from some final perspective, from a "last judgment." Both dimensions are needed.

> "If we look at history only from 'above' we obscure the meaning of its 'self-surpassing growth.' If we look at it only from a spatially symbolized end we obscure all the richness and variety which it expresses in its many parts."[81]

As the Christian faith seeks to comprehend the meaning of history, it must deal with three aspects of it: (1) the partial achievements of civilizations; (2) the life of individuals; and (3) the process of history as a whole. The view from the end will predominate in the last aspect, while that from above will predominate in the first two. While the chief concern of the present study is survival and the nature of eternal life,

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[79] Ibid. The meaning of a martyrdom may go unnoticed on earth and be "recorded in heaven," it may have an absolute meaning apart from any particular consequences.

[80] (cf. Ueber die Epochen der Neueren Geschichte)

[81] Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II, p. 301

Niebuhr has such a high correlation of all three of these aspects of the problem that no one can be disengaged and treated separately without doing harm to his posttion. His conclusions concerning each aspect can be briefly summarized.

Civilizations and cultures rise and fall and exhibit a diversity of content which must be understood primarily, if not wholly, from above; that is, in terms of its historical configuration as an integral realm of meaning. Spengler and Toynbee have given impetus to the pluralistic interpretation of history, and conform in their own way to Ranke's conception of the equidistance of all temporal events from the eternal. But, says Niebuhr, "even historical pluralism cannot escape the question of comprehensive meaning."[82] Spengler seeks this meaning by equating historical organisms with natural ones and the fate of civilizations is to pass through a natural cycle analogous to spring, summer, autumn and winter. For Toynbee the decline of civilizations results from the misuse of freedom and creative possibilities and not from the weakness of age. Both Spengler and Toynbee recognize periods of growth and decline, though one reduces this to a cycle of nature and the other to a misuse of freedom. If history is viewed from within a creative period, it may tend to absolutize its emerging meanings; if history is viewed from within a period of decline, it is threatened with meaninglessness.

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[82] Ibid., p. 302

> "Whatever meaning there is in the rise and fall of civilizations can be known only 'by faith'; for it must be viewed from the vantage point of an eternity above history, which no man has as a possession but only by faith. From such a vantage point history is meaningful, even if it should be impossible to discern any unity in its continuing processes. It is meaningful because eternal principles are vindicated in both the life which overcomes death in rising civilizations and in the death which overtakes proud life in dying ones."[83]

The meaning of the individual arises from a twofold relationship to the process of history. His creativity is invested in his historical situation, and his life derives some of its meaning from that process. But he has also a "direct relation to eternity" as he seeks a completion of the meaning for his life beyond the possible fragmentary realizations of his time or his civilization. "The end of an individual life is, for him, the end of history; and every individual is a Moses who perishes outside the promised land."[84] The individual has an indirect relation to eternity as well, for his responsible and creative participation in history makes it necessary for him to gain one dimension of fulfillment from the ultimate and final end.

It follows that any interpretation of eternal fulfillment of life from <u>above</u> will regard the individual life as an end in itself, and the social and historical meaning of life will be denied. On the other hand, any view which attempts to fulfill life purely from within history does not realize the inadequacies of the community to give a final meaning to life.

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[83] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 307

[84] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 308

> "Historical communities are, in short, more deeply involved in nature and time than the individual who constantly faces an eternity above and at the end of the time process."[85]

The New Testament answer involves both dimensions of eternity. The idea of a "general resurrection" that brings back the departed to participate in the fulfillment of history, does justice both to the value of the "individual life, without which the fulfillment of history would be incomplete; and to the meaning of the whole course of history for the individual, without which his life cannot be fulfilled."[86]

Finally, history must be seen as a unity. A consistent pluralism is neither tenable nor plausible. It may indeed be meaningful in its particular events as seen from <u>above</u>; yet history as such represents a "total realm of coherence" which requires comprehension from the perspective of its ultimate <u>telos</u>. History represents, whatever else can be said of it, a growth, even though the patterns of growth are obscured by the rise and fall of civilizations. Modern secular culture equates growth with progress and gives the latter a moral connotation; believes, in short, that "history moves from chaos to cosmos by forces immanent within it."[87] Niebuhr agrees that there is growth but disputes an inevitable progress.

> "The peril of a more positive disorder is implicit in the higher and more complex order which human freedom constructs on the foundations of nature's harmonies and securities."[88]

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[85] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 310
[86] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 311
[87] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 315
[88] <u>Ibid</u>.

The New Testament symbol for this aspect of historical reality is, as stated earlier,[89] the Antichrist, for the most radical denial of the norm of history must be expected in the most ultimate development of history. There is, therefore, no special security guaranteed by the cumulative achievements of the future. History as a whole does not constitute the fulfillment nor guarantee a final telos. History does not solve the basic problems of human existence but reveals them on ever new levels of complexity. "This wisdom about our destiny," writes Niebuhr, in the final paragraph of his Gifford Lectures,

> "is dependent upon a humble recognition of the limits of our knowledge and power. Our most reliable understanding is the fruit of 'grace' in which faith completes our ignorance without pretending to possess its certainties as knowledge; and in which contrition mitigates our pride without destroying our hope." [90]

THE RESURRECTION HOPE

The chief concerns implicit in the discussion of the biblical understanding of human nature, of selfhood, of freedom and sin, of history and destiny, all converge in the Gospel message concerning the Resurrection. To state that convergence briefly is to summarize our entire analysis. The self is a unity and all attempts to divide the mortal and immortal parts disavow that unity. Fulfillment means that the total man--body, soul and spirit--will participate in the Resurrection. This hope is expressed

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[89] See supra, p. 32

[90] Ibid., p. 321

in St. Paul's vision of the transfigured "spiritual body." The individuality of the self is not annulled in the Resurrection, for eternity does not cancel but fulfills the temporal. The resurrection of the "body" expresses that individuality and at the same time denies any assumption that particularity is of itself an evil to be overcome. The freedom of the self is expressed in the symbol of the Resurrection in a way that emphasizes both the dignity and the misery of man. There is dignity in the affirmation that the Resurrection and an eternal destiny is possible, but misery in the fact of man's sin and death which must be overcome and which man, of himself, cannot overcome. Those religions which do not adequately assess this latter dimension often succumb to a too simple assurance that the spiritual character of man's nature is indestructible and thus death is no real threat to him. For Niebuhr the assurances of the Christian faith and hope are founded in the love of God, rather than the immortal nature of man.

Finally, the Resurrection hope affirms not alone the individuality of man, but also the social nature of man's existence. The symbol of the general Resurrection expresses this dimension of the Christian hope. History has its telos as well as its finis, and the drama of God's mighty acts is addressed to men as individuals and also to their corporate life. History is not the vehicle of salvation ushering in the golden age by reason of its cumulative achievements. However, it is not for that reason of no account. History is the realm wherein the great struggles of men and the redemptive action of God have given partial fulfillment to man's life and hope for a life to come. If those partial meanings are to be in fact fulfilled, then history itself has to be redeemed and not annulled.

SUMMARY AND CRITIQUE

A summary and critique which attempts to do justice to the men surveyed and to the implications of their thought when directed to the concept of eternal life must be wary of several pitfalls. These pitfalls may be avoided by heeding a comment Tillich made some years ago as a preface to his discussion of the conception of man in existential philosophy. Tillich writes,

> "Man is a unity and a totality... The unity of man does not imply that it is possible to examine him in one way only. Since man includes all elements of reality, every stratum of being, it is necessary to use all methods in order to deal with him adequately. He is the microcosmos, the description of the macrocosmos. Therefore, it is wrong to make <u>one</u> method of approaching man the only one or to subordinate all other methods to one single approach, whether the theological method in early times or the rationalistic method in modern times or the empirical method of today. On the other hand, we must avoid any atomism of methods. It must be shown that in each method elements appear which drive toward the others; that the empirical approach cannot be used without elements discovered by the rationalistic method; and that this in turn presupposes certain elements furnished by theology. The methods of studying human nature should be neither exclusive nor merely atomistic and summative, but dialectical and mutually interdependent."[1]

The choice to use this advice for a guide in the summary and critique which follows grows out of the conviction that it is as valid for a discussion of man's destiny as it is for the discussion of his nature. This means that the critique will not attempt, to use Tillich's words, "to subordinate all other methods to one single approach." Rather, the contribution of each thinker will be given a critical review in an

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[1] Tillich, Paul, "The Conception of Man in Existential Philosophy", <u>The Journal of Religion</u>, Vol. XIX (July 1939), p. 201

attempted dialogue concerning the problems his thought poses, particularly where those problems seem unresolved.

Though the position of the present writer will become apparent in the course of the critique, a comment can be made at this point to describe the position from which the critique is launched. The general orientation of the present writer can be described by pointing to a line of "neo-Reformation" thought which had its roots in the writing of Augustine, was given impetus in the modern period by Kierkegaard, and is represented in the contemporary scene by Reinhold Niebuhr. In an earlier thesis[2] the present writer analyzed Kierkegaard's critique of Hegel. His identification with Kierkegaard's critique of Hegel in that thesis has its contemporary counterpart in his disposition to agree with Niebuhr in Niebuhr's debate with Tillich on the subject of ontology and the historic faith.[3] Though the position of the present writer is closest to that of Niebuhr, we shall find in the review and critique of Niebuhr's position that some questions are raised concerning Niebuhr's thought as it deals with fulfillment and destiny.

We shall review and analyze, then, these four perspectives which are part of the contemporary dialogue about man's destiny. If it is true that one or two of these positions numbers more adherents in the current philosophical or theological scene, that by itself does not add

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[2] Gibson, Raymond E., "Kierkegaard's Critique of Hegel." Presented in partial fulfillment of the degree of Bachelor of Divinity at Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1947.

[3] Niebuhr, Reinhold, "Biblical Thought and Ontological Speculation," The Theology of Paul Tillich. Kegley and Bretall, editors (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1952), pp. 216-230

validity to these particular views. Public officials may be elected by ballot: it would be a strange procedure that arrived at "truth" by way of majority opinion. Our concern is the nature of the dialogue that is taking place. What has each man contributed to the dialogue? What are the key points in his perspective which affect the contemporary status of the concept of fulfillment and destiny? What are the problems each position encounters in its philosophical or theological method? Are there unresolved elements in each man's thought and, if so, what are they? What, if anything, can be said about the immediate future of the dialogue concerning man's destiny, viewed as temporal or eternal?

William Ernest Hocking

In Hocking's idealism, the problem of personal survival of death turns finally upon the assumptions he makes about the bonds of union between the Real, values and the self. Duration is a dimension of value and values are achieved, understood and conserved by selves. If lastingness is a value, and Hocking asserts that it is, it would indeed be a cruel fate for inanimate and unconscious things alone to endure or persist without knowing their status as eternals, while men who experience and contemplate perpetuity are destined to perish. To lose these selves is to lose their memory, and loss of memories constitutes a loss of meaning. Without the persistence through death of individual human selves, the world and all history can be seen as an extended wasteland full of "the blunt edges of human meanings, the wreckage of

human values and therefore the failures of God."[4]

The premises for Hocking's argument for immortality are basically the same as those which were elaborated in his earlier work, The Meaning of God in Human Experience. The cosmos is personalized. The world is like man, or more accurately, man at his best is akin to the deepest reality of his total environment. Man's time is, or should be, to use Plato's term, a "moving image" of eternity. For Hocking it is not merely moving, it is "growing." Human existence is an invitation to take on or achieve reality, not the phenomenal reality which is passing, which the "excursive self" knows in time, but a larger and more complete reality which is equivalent to whatever powers are at work in the universe. Behind, underlying and permeating the common realities that lie at hand is the real world which is not a realm of blind chance or aimless process, but a spiritual, moral wholeness congenial to and a guarantor of man's endeavors. This is a vision of things which sees the highest meaning of life, the purposes at work in history and the activity and triumph of God merge into one. It is a vision in which man knows God because their object worlds are one and their objective goods are the same.

Idealistic philosophies have been criticized for their tendency to identify consciousness with mind and to equate the highest reaches of mind with a divine or absolute mind. The self becomes an aspect of universal mind: The self is identified with reason and Reason with

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[4] Hocking, W. E., The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), p. 76

God.[5] Hocking is aware of this problem and guards against any surrender of particularity. He maintains that the self cannot retreat from history, for to dwell in the universal is false and "hides from the truth which is 'only' in the fact."[6] Those philosophies which surrender the individual to some larger collectivity, whether it be the race or the state, or even the march of history, commit what Hocking calls the "fallacy of totalism" and overlook the fact that "the individual secures the race, not the race the individual." His concern for the individual is in turn a key to his argument for fulfillment and fulfillment is possible for individuals who have a destiny beyond death. The individual, as free and creative, is an end in himself. The values achieved and conserved for the world are carried in the individual and are not, finally, transferable.

> "If my meaning is to be a segment in a line or a particle of the state, or of history...I become a diminished and divided thing."[7]

The case for human fulfillment turns on the question of immortality and is constructed out of the ontological status of selfhood as creator and bearer of meaning and value.

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[5] This is the argument Kierkegaard wages against Hegel, in which he argues that the individual is higher than the universal. This is an argument that Niebuhr has continued to direct at "all forms of classical idealism."

[6] Hocking, The Meaning of God in Human Experience (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1912), p. 512

[7] Ibid., p. 502

> "The intimation of survival comes as something seen and clearly judged, as if one had been admitted for an instant to the weighing places of the powers of the universe and had perceived that this sort of thing, the self, cannot be destroyed."[8]

A case can be made against the universe itself if the creator of meaning and value allows the destruction of value-realizing beings.

Personal immortality, however, is conditional upon the individual achievement of reality and value. To deserve to endure is the only guarantee of enduring. By living my present life well I render my soul "pregnant with otherness and gravitant toward new birth." In the cosmic order there is something essentially eternal in which the individual human self can participate and by doing so "take on" a reality that is "unloseable." We know this, says Hocking, by a perception he variously calls intuition, prophetic power, or mystical consciousness. However named, it is the final evidence each individual has that "he is <u>right</u> and <u>real</u>, it is, in a word his assurance of salvation, his share of divinity, his anticipation of all attainment."[9] What I do by way of value achievement here, however historic and particular it may be, is shot through with a possible eternity and a destiny in my deeds is integral to whatever future is before me. The purpose of life is to live well. The death of human quality sets in whenever one behaves badly, whether his physical existence continues or not. Living well "acquires reality" and the more reality one achieves the greater is the possibility that it will carry him through the crisis of physical death.

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[8] Hocking, <u>The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience</u>, p. 71

[9] _____, <u>The Meaning of God in Human Experience</u>, p. 512

Hopefully, this crisis of physical death will prove to be the encounter of the real with the Real in which the Real will be found to be conscious and living, and survival to be the opportunity for further progress in the pursuit of significant values. In such a view eternal life consists not in one everlasting completeness so much as the perennial pursuit and achievement of ever enlarging values. The same self, essentially, must persist beyond physical death; the individual mind and the personal identity must be able to integrate in its new habitat with meanings achieved in the past and thus guarantee a continuity and conservation of values.

In one regard it is possible to note similarities between the problems encountered in Hocking's doctrine of God and his position regarding immortality. In the former there is the gap to overcome between "idea" and the "reality" which is the object of the idea; in the latter there is a gap between what "ought to be" and what "is." The question must be raised whether Hocking has managed to close the gap in either case.

In his earlier work on The Meaning of God in Human Experience, Hocking restated for modern thought a form of the ontological argument which blended elements of traditional idealism and modern empiricism. Although it is not crucial to the present argument to analyze his doctrine of God in detail, it can be noted that the traditional objection to the ontological argument--that one cannot deduce the existence of any being from the idea of that being, nor move from the "unique" idea of perfection with conclusive assurance to the existence of the object

of that idea--[10] is not overcome by the "empirical" testimony Hocking finds in the "mystical consciousness."

The question that continues to arise as one analyzes Hocking's thought is just how empirical is his thought or, more accurately, what kind of empiricism is it.[11] He seeks to take account of pragmatic as well as rational elements in knowledge. He values the individual and the particular. He repeatedly asserts that he will follow the "facts" with rigor. He takes into account the temporal and unfinished character in experience. Yet his "facts" continually lead him beyond the temporal to the absolute. However much his method may seem to follow an empirical line, it is dependent upon assumptions and goals associated with traditional idealism. In his intuitional "Experience of the Whole," and in his assertion that "deeper than idea is Idea," there lies the assumption of a "unique" Other that is a self-vindicating and self-authenticating a priori on which all else depends. Hocking's empiricism assumes that the basic category of experience must be "idea," and this

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[10] The logic inherent in the idea of perfection may involve the idea of existence, but only the idea. The difficulty is not removed of establishing conclusively that a necessary connection between ideas is necessarily supported by reality. The gulf between idea and reality cannot be bridged by deduction alone.

[11] I would agree with Professor Martin's comment about Hocking's thought in which he maintains that "the natural and social experience to which a less ambiguous empiricism would appeal for its foundational data is simply and solely the concrete, particular, public, changing and 'unfinished' experience which Hocking feels called upon to 'explain,' 'through successive stages of logic,' in terms of a priori concepts more usually associated with rationalistic philosophy. A more consistent empiricism would seek rather to account for natural, social, and personal contexts of experience in terms of each other." J. A. Martin, Empirical Philosophies of Religion (New York: King's Crown Press, 1949), p. 16

unique intuitional or mystical experience is prior to the part-experiences of the passing and "excursive" self. Indeed, it is what makes particular experiences intelligible. To this position three questions can be raised. Is the intuitional experience to be had universally under a definable set of conditions? Is it not rather clear from the testimony of the mystics that there is a variety of mystical types and theories of mystical experience? Is this a priori "experience of the Whole" self-vindicating, or is it to a large extent dependent upon Hocking's interpretative concepts which are in turn derived in part from philosophical analysis of the problem of knowledge and in part from broadly Christian value judgments? Hocking's is a position which, to use James' terms, asserts that belief in an eternal absolute is really the presupposition of "tough-minded" investigation rather than weakness or tendermindedness. It may well be, however, that no matter how "tough-minded," any attempt to blend idealism and empiricism will eventually and inevitably involve some qualification and revision in the presuppositions and methods of one or the other, or both. It may well be that the unresolved problems in Hocking's thought in this regard are the price he must pay to achieve whatever blending he manages. It is the judgment here that the rationalistic commitments of Hocking's idealism are not validated by his empirical method.

If we are to draw an analogy between the problems Hocking encounters in this doctrine of God and those he confronts in his work in immortality, it is apparent that Hocking is aware of the limitations of the empirical method in demonstrating the reality of survival. Hocking acknowledges that it is empirical for the survivor only. Many of the arguments he

marshalls in defense of his position concerning survival lack the authority of a consistent empiricism, at least the order of empirical certainty we associate with the scientific enterprise. The treatment of the relation of the mind and the brain, one dimension of the traditional soul and body problem, in which Hocking attempts to demonstrate that the mind does not "depend" upon the body and may indeed exhibit remarkable qualities of freedom from it, lacks the force of a demonstration. His critique of any simple correlation of mind and brain which would involve determinism or annul freedom is carefully reasoned. His analyses of freedom and creativity are valid descriptions of present experience, and with these we have no quarrel. The extension of that freedom beyond the destruction of the body at death, however, places a burden upon the argument which it cannot carry. His analysis of the nature of the self "here" is well reasoned; it is the projection of that self from a "time transcending" being into a possible omni-temporal being that creates the problem.

The key question concerning Hocking's empiricism is best demonstrated in his analysis of the self. Hocking's principle of "empirical duality" or two selves--an "excursive self" in the world, and the "reflective self" which transcends the world--contributes descriptive insights about self transcendence. One can acknowledge this without agreeing with the implications Hocking goes on to draw that the reflective self by its very nature confers a "kind of immortality" upon events. In the term he employs, "empirical duality," it can be questioned whether the second order of selfhood, the "reflective self," is not described in terms which elude empirical analysis and revert to a frame of reference which is idealistic.

The reflective self Hocking describes is free and creative of its world, and this very creativity and freedom lends the capacity to conceive of "plural worlds," and, as well, of a "radical otherness" in the universe. The reflective self intuits, in Hocking's language, that beyond the shallow others of present place and task death may usher in the thoroughly other, the other life, the passage from "the apprenticeship in creativity to the exercise of a maturer art."[12] But here again the movement from the idea or the intuition to the reality it represents is presented in such a way as to suggest that the idea is the reality or, at very least, what ought to be. The reflective self is more "real" than a "stone" because it "knows" its own reality and more permanent than the stone because it conserves values that are indestructible. Hocking admits that his chain of argument has not arrived at a proof but at a "judgment." Though it is not verifiable by us, nor clearly seen in the imagination, survival is not devoid of meaning. If survival is not a reality, there is something essentially wrong at the very heart of things. This judgment, guided and reinforced by intuition which enlarges intellect without contradicting it, enhanced further by the evidence that survival evokes so strong a sense of fitness and rightness, and buttressed by the argument that duration is truly a dimension of value, grows in force. Though no one of these arguments can provide final verity, their combined weight amounts nearly to a demonstration. Thus, though Hocking warns against the movement from "It could be so" by way of the argument that

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[12] Hocking, The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience, p. 65

"It should be so" to the position, "It must be so," his own case for survival would have to be altered if he obeyed that warning in a strict way.

There are other questions that can be raised concerning Hocking's argument for individual, personal survival of death. His position that "duration is a dimension of value" involves numerous problems. In Eastern religions, and particularly Hinduism, the duration of the particular self is not regarded as a value. On the contrary, the final goal of Nirvana is one which negates karma and obliterates the duration of personal identity by mystical absorption into the undifferentiated unity of God. For the Hindu, the supreme value annuls individual duration. Hocking describes this kind of fulfillment as "world negating" mysticism. In Hinduism, the very negation of the world is a value.

There is a case to be made for the provisional duration of values as they are achieved and conserved by persons and movements. Without some form of persistence through change, values could not be discovered, created, or conserved. One can agree with Whitehead that the longing is not unreasonable that looks for an unchanging source of the Good beyond and in the changing goods of experience. This longing can be described without adding validity to the assumption that individual selves must endure endlessly or the world is full of the "wreckage of human values and therefore the failures of God." Values may have a status apart from the "everlasting" endurance of the persons who bear values in their being. Hocking's assertion that individual self consciousness must endure if all values are to be conserved and that the loss of the individual constitutes a loss of meaning holds a partial truth. His complaint, "if my meaning

is a segment, I become a diminished and divided thing" may also be true. However, two questions are appropriate. (1) Are there meanings in the moment that have an "eternal" character apart from their duration? (2) Must all partial meanings finally be gathered up into some consummate meaning before they have status or validity as real? To complain that one is a "divided thing" if his meaning is only a "segment" involves the assumption that only "wholes" have real meaning. Yet when Hocking describes the character of survival he rejects an everlasting completeness in favor of the "perennial pursuit" and achievement of "ever-enlarging values." He therefore implies that if one does not survive death his "segment" of meaning is fractured and therefore devoid of meaning, whereas if he survives death he is still in an "achieving" realm, and whatever else Hocking says about that realm, his discussion of itsas "perennial pursuit" merely "extends the segment." By this "extension" he has added a quantitative rather than a qualitative dimension to life, has added a perennial pursuit without, it seems, any final concept of fulfillment. So conceived, it might be possible to add to Hocking's earlier dictum and say that not only time, but eternity, is full of the "blunt edges of human wreckage and the failures of God." This complaint about his position may be unwarranted, for Hocking has maintained that though there are coherences between the "here" and the "hereafter," there is a quality in the second that is finally mysterious. The fact that so much of Hocking's language at this point is lyrical and mystical makes it difficult to find the careful distinctions an adequate appraisal requires.

Our deepest point at issue with Hocking turns on the whole question of

the way the man-God relationship is understood. For Hocking, selves are real and, being grounded in the Ultimately Real, are becoming more real. Selves "take on" or achieve values which are time transcending and eternal. The description of selves in their relation to God is value oriented, though at their highest these values merge into mystical apprehension and, if not identity, at least kinship with deity. It is surprising that Hocking has not given more attention and weight to the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. Is it not possible that the doctrine of the God/man provides a deeper insight into the divine-human relationship than does the "value-realizing capacity" which relates man to what is "deepest in the universe?" Indeed we would go beyond the Incarnation to the Atonement and ask whether the case for survival of death depends on man's achievement of values or on the redeeming power and action of a merciful God. We find our greatest opposition to Hocking's concept of "immortability" or provisional immortality. It seems to the present writer that there is an inherent hazard in setting standards of any sort, or in maintaining that some survive and some do not on the basis of values they have managed to achieve. Hocking's values that issue in immortality seem particularly hazardous. For him the case is made with reference to man's time-transcending capacity in consciousness and his freedom as creator. These provide a hinge or vinculum between the real and the Real, provide indeed opportunity for the achievement of that pregnancy with reality which death cannot annul. However, only some men survive to participate in the extended quest for values which is immortality. Yet all men are free and all men have creative capabilities, however badly they misuse those capacities and powers. No one, we assume,

fully achieves the values for which he strives or uses his freedom with perfection. In the language of the biblical faith, "all men are sinners and have fallen short..." Who, then, is to say at what point some will survive and others be lost? The tradition within Christian thought which emphasizes the Resurrection and Last Judgment seems a more adequate symbol, at least in the insight that all participate. Man, in all the paradoxical character of his achievements and the brokenness of his virtue, is resurrected to judgment. There is a "fitness" in the position which asserts that all men are created free and time-transcending selves, and all men are resurrected to a judgment upon their use of that freedom. Hocking would doubtless assert that the very failure to survive constitutes the "last judgment." However, in another place he has maintained that in the Last Judgment,

> "the Universe must do its duty by us, allowing us to participate in the Last Judgment--to know the worth of what we tried to do--to be part of that judgment and to stand self-judged, not judged by an absolute Other."[13]

If the Last Judgment is to be a self-judgment, then there is no provision for the self-conscious awareness of defeat for those who fail in Hocking's concept of immortability, and no account of what their "defeat" means as a victory of the good or a failure, even a partial failure, of God. We miss in Hocking the drama of the creating and redeeming personal God who, however much he transcends His creation, enters into its pain and travail on behalf of His creatures. A key image for Hocking's view of man's self-transcendence is symbolized by his capacity to conceive plural spaces, the figure for which was the question "How far is it from the top of the

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[13] Ibid., p. 218

mountain in the picture to the floor of the room in which the picture is hung?" Thus Hocking moves out "empirically" and "speculatively" from man's time-transcending capacities to his conclusions about man's destiny as time-conquesting in his survival of death. We would alter the picture to contain a portrayal of the crucifixion and ask "How far is it from the divine mercy to man's finitude, sin and need of redemption?" To pose the question in this way may well make the answer a matter of "faith" rather than "speculation." However, to state the issue in this manner will require that "faith" provide an answer and not merely a begging of the question which "speculation" has raised.

Edgar Sheffield Brightman

The theistic personalism of E. S. Brightman, not unlike the individualistic idealism of Hocking, constructs its metaphysical doctrines with chief emphasis placed on the reality and ultimate significance of values. Again, the locus of values is in persons. Some analogies are possible between the description both thinkers offer of man's involvement in and transcendence over his immediate experience. In Hocking's principle of empirical duality, "excursive self" and "reflective self" resemble Brightman's analysis of the "shining present" and "illuminating absent." Hocking relates mind to Other mind, just as Brightman relates the person to the Supreme Person. For both men the individual self or person is a bearer of meaning and value, and the case for survival is intimately related to the conviction, to use Brightman's terms, that "God, the Conserver of values, must be God, the Conserver of persons."

Brightman, like Hocking, insists that his philosophical method is empirical. Brightman is unwilling to assert that the empirical verification of God is of the same order of conclusiveness or certainty as scientific method, even though there are similarities between the two. Purpose, insight, and fact are presupposed in any kind of verification. Both scientific and metaphysical verification share in their conclusions the limitations of being hypothetical propositions. No verification could be called complete until all experience has ended, and no such vantage point is obtainable in time. Yet even within man's temporal and passing experience, reality never evades his grasp for man as experient is part of it. Thus Brightman couples a "theoretical relativism" with a "practical absolutism" by affirming the possibility of acting on the strength of the supposition that a belief is true until proved false. This means for Brightman's empiricism that his search for religious truth, though different from scientific method in object and scope, attempts to preserve "the scientific spirit of quest and integrity." The object of scientific inquiry concerns the facts and laws of nature: religion seeks ultimate standards of value.

> "Both science and philosophy are movements of experience from a state of confusion toward a state of order and coherence. Science is such a movement in a limited field; philosophy aims to interpret all experience in a comprehensive unity... One who holds (this) viewpoint is an empiricist."[14]

The end result of a comprehensive philosophy of religion will lead to theistic belief which, Brightman thinks, can provide the most consistent

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[14] Brightman, E. S., The Philosophy of Religion (New York: Prentice Hall, 1945), p. 1

and coherent interpretation of the experience of persons, because ultimate truth is rooted in God, the ontologically real Person.[15]

The objection that will be raised here to Brightman's theistic personalism has to do with his method, his conclusions about the nature of God and the character of fulfillment and destiny he affirms. In the earlier exposition of his thought,[16] a detailed analysis was given of the problem of the Given and Brightman's doctrine of a finite God. Here the question is raised about the "empiricism" which led to his position. It was the interpretation of the problem of evil in experience which drove Brightman to a view which lifted what was seemingly an insoluble problem in human life into the life of God. Here, it seems, is the basic problem for Brightman's position. Reasoning by analogies from the experience of human persons to the Divine Person the logic which transplants the evil of the world to the Given in the Divine may appear to be credible. Brightman, however, affirms that God is "perfect in goodness." It is not made clear how he reasons from the imperfect goodness of man to the perfect goodness he imputes to divinity. By what measure can man survey the attributes of divinity and find one perfect (as in God's goodness), another approaching perfection by overcoming certain obstacles (as in God's partial successes in history), and the last perennially imperfect (as regards God's power). How, especially, can he impute infinite or perfect qualities to divinity if the method on which he has proceeded

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[15] _____, Religious Values (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1925), p. 28

[16] See supra, pps. 154-155

has been strictly empirical? Where, in his experience, is the model or type which is perfection? If it was objected that Hocking gave more weight to mystical consciousness than it could bear, with Brightman the objection would be that the limits of the analogies from the experience of human persons must be more strictly drawn. In point of fact, the analogies have been drawn far enough beyond a strict empiricism to have to be "shored up" by "faith." The faith is both in the goodness and in the power of the Divine. He maintains that, though finite, God will always be able to control the Given.[17] We would agree with Knudson when he argues that faith in God rests ultimately on faith in an ideal, and that nothing short of the highest ideal will satisfy faith; indeed,

> "if the existence of evil requires us to affirm either the divine impotence or human ignorance, and if one theory is logically as tenable as the other, faith will have no hesitancy in making its choice in favor of the latter."[18]

Even if one accepts provisionally the description of God's relation to the Given within his nature, how can it be said that God is, in spite of it, all-good? Brightman himself seems not to have closed the gap between his insistence on the one hand that God is "a conscious Person of perfect good will," that He is "eternally perfect good will and eternally perfect reason" and on the other hand his admission that God's goodness is a power for goodness and reason, a power which conquers

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[17] Brightman says that the denial of absolute sovereignty leaves God "still sufficient power to control the ongoing of the cosmic process and sets no fixed bounds to the eternal growth and creativity of spiritual life in the universe." Personality and Religion (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1934), pp. 114-115

[18] Knudson, A. C., The Doctrine of Redemption (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1933), pp. 206-207

obstacles slowly and with roundabout and painful methods. In different language, is God actually good or a potentiality for good? The issue becomes sharper when we recall that Brightman disclaims any dualism of ultimate principle in the universe,[19] and yet gives the Given an eternal status as obstacle in the nature of God.[20] "Thus," says Brightman,

> "we see life as the drama of a suffering and striving God who never loses courage in his wrestling with the Given, but who also faces in his struggles conditions which he did not create and for which it would be unreasonable to hold him responsible."[21]

The consequences of such a line of argument when we consider man's destiny leaves much to be desired. Man's destiny and fulfillment is in man's immortality. Brightman has said that the only good argument for immortality is theistic philosophy which posits an infinite being, a supreme, cosmic Person--God--who is committed to values and the conservation of values and who will, doubtless, conserve the persons who are bearers of value. But the goodness of God is not so much the key at this point as is the power of God, and Brightman's God is finite. Might it not be just as reasonable to infer that the death of human beings is the price, however tragic, which must be paid to the Given, and that the good which God has wrested from this situation is really no more than the transmission of values from generation to generation and the community created for human beings through compassion and fellow feeling at the time of bereavement. Brightman says that it is a "reasonable faith" to

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[19] Brightman, The Problem of God (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1930), pp. 134-135

[20] This criticism is made most fully by Ross, F. H., Personalism and the Problem of Evil (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), p. 43

[21] Brightman, The Problem of God, p. 174

suppose that the Creator who sustains personalities in this world "has resources sufficient to continue their existence in another order."[22] It is difficult to see how such a "reasonable faith" can stand on an empirical footing. It would seem that Brightman's position, and especially in light of his insistence that his rigor of thought drove him to a doctrine of a finite God, could with equal honesty follow the evident "facts" of experience to the hard conclusion that death is the end. He nowhere describes the values achieved by survival in any other terms than in continual striving for attainment. In this regard, Brightman's position is very similar to Hocking's. He says that there may be comfort in conceiving eternal life as the solution to all present problems, as the perfection of all present imperfections, as the place where "all tears are wiped away." He believes that such a view presents empirical difficulties. The only life which is known is one of struggle, progress, retrogression. If immortality is the fulfillment of the highest promise of this life, it might better be conceived as unending creativity, new discoveries and growth rather than as effortless and complete perfection.

> "The law of spiritual continuity points rather toward the future life as continuous with this life, preserving memories of it, devoted to its ideal values, yet solving the problems of existence on even higher and more creative levels."[23]

We would say of Brightman as we said of Hocking, that such a view provides an "extension" rather than a fulfillment of life. Would it not

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[22] _____, The Philosophy of Religion, p. 407

[23] Ibid.

be more empirical merely to affirm that the struggle goes on here without transferring it to another order for its continuation.

Brightman describes immortality as "conditional" and dependent on certain qualities of attainment. The question can be raised whether this does not qualify his earlier thesis that every person is an end in himself and must be so treated by the Supreme Person. One gains the impression from the total body of his writing that Brightman has no strong commitments to personal immortality so much as he has made room for the possibility of immortality as a way of nodding to the tradition in which he stands. This impression grows when one notices that in Brightman's final work the concept of the "illuminating absent" contains much that can be accounted for by the experience of transcendence over the present moment, but nothing that points definitely beyond the temporal, space-time reference. There is nothing in his discussion of time, value, the status of the person, or the meaning of destiny that is not meaningful within the scope of present life. Nowhere does the argument appear in persuasive form that the present requires another order of being or order of time for final meaning or validity. In the brief argument in A Philosophy of Religion,[24] Brightman says that if God fails to maintain persons in existence as intrinsic values, then each generation is warmed by the bonfire consuming the former one, and no permanent results appear for God and a frustrated and disappointed God would remain. But this is not inconsistent with the picture of a finite God eternally combatting the Given

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[24] Ibid., p. 402

in his nature. Indeed, Brightman lends credence to this very prospect by saying that the eternal striving for completeness is of value rather than the final achievement and that perfection is to be understood in the "eternal perfectibility" of things. Thus, though Brightman has indicated his personal preferences and inclinations toward faith in the personal survival of death by individuals, the implications of his philosophical method rigidly adhered to could have the matter otherwise. The status he gives to persons in time is noble and his sense of values is acute. The status of those individuals as death-surviving beings is vague and is beyond the reach of a philosophy that would remain empirical throughout. A deeper problem than that of Brightman's empiricism remains.

Brightman continually describes persons and God, the Supreme Person, as value-realizing beings. He describes man's struggle to achieve values as the deepest meaning and surest fulfillment in experience. He grapples with the problem of evil or "dis-value" as the central problem of his thought, and in so doing his most pervasive consideration of the divine has centered on God's struggle with the Given. He is driven to his doctrine of a finite God. His conviction that empirical coherence is the criterion of truth and his attempt to give an empirically coherent solution of the problem of evil obscure a key consideration that might well have changed the basic direction of his thought. The question must be asked, "What is the essential character or nature of the person--human or divine?" We would shift the focus from the problem of evil to the nature of love. When the asertion is made that God is love, this is not just a value He

strives to realize but a truth about His being. An analysis of the love of God as it relates to man's freedom will, we believe, illumine a depth which Brightman's thought did not reach. It is the nature of love to give freedom to that which it loves and to bear the burden of that freedom by its vulnerability when the love is not returned. Professor Williams has written,

> "Say then that God has risked giving real freedom to his creation. He has allowed pain in it and travail, and He has done this out of a love that will not have a world on any other terms but our learning what a free response to Him means. Complete invulnerability would be complete arbitrariness on God's part. It would be weakness and not strength."[25]

We are suggesting that Brightman's preoccupation with the problem of evil and his consequent doctrine of a finite God is less adequate than an interpretation which sees in this same experience a redeeming divine love creatively at work.

> "The pangs of creation <u>can</u> be joyous. Surely we get the problem of the suffering God out of balance if we use suffering as equivalent with something negative, something only to be overcome, something wholly evil. The fact of our human experience is that suffering can be radiant, and be a source of joy when it is a part of a new creation.
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> "To say that the love of God suffers is to say that God is laboring with His world in its freedom, that it is through bearing with an unfinished world that the divine work gets done."[26]

If, as we suggested in our comments on Hocking's thought, "faith" is an answer that dares not "beg the questions raised by speculation,"

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[25] Williams, D. D., "The Vulnerable and Invulnerable God", <u>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</u>, Vol. XVII No. 3 (March 1962), p. 226

[26] <u>Ibid</u>.

we are now saying that the object of that faith is a God whose very being is love. There are hints of that love in our human experience of love. There is a supreme revelation of that love in the person of Jesus Christ. It is through the experience of redemptive love, human and divine, that we have our deepest knowledge of our world, our history and ourselves. One might agree with Brightman that empirical coherence is the criterion of truth and discover in experience of God's revelation of Himself as love the truth that gives coherence to man's fulfillment and destiny.

Henry Nelson Wieman

Any critique of Wieman's thought should take note of an interesting comment which appears at the end of one of his last works, in which he says that "other metaphysical systems are possible." He implies by this comment that in the ongoing process of creative and evolving meanings, his contribution must take its place as one among many, must be a partial view, claim for itself that it is only one perspective, and eschew any special pretension to completeness. This admission indeed follows from his vision of things, for competing and complementing visions from differing perspectives must offer their contribution to the process, and Wieman would never fall into Hegel's trap by assuming that he had written THE SYSTEM. What follows here by way of summary or critique concerns the vision that Wieman has enunciated, for though he has admitted the possibility of other metaphysical systems, the one he has elaborated is the object of our study.

If the categories of meaning and value were central to the individualistic idealism of Hocking, and the category of the Person central to Brightman's thought, for Wieman, the concept of Process is held to be the most general and fundamental idea. With Whitehead, Bergson, Hartshorne and others, Wieman has elaborated a metaphysical position strongly influenced by the impact of modern science on the world view of Western thought during the past three centuries. The chief characteristic of the influence of science has been to see the organic quality of reality; yet Wieman has not, for all his concern with "process" thought, lost sight of the individual. In Wieman's thought there is a fine and subtle balance between his view of the total organic process of reality and the meaning of personal life in emerging awareness of meaning and value. The one is never severed from the other, and indeed cannot be. They are held together in the "creative event,"[27] which provides the key to the understanding of the cosmic process and personal realization. The "creative event" can, for purposes of analysis be broken down into stages or elements. There is first the emerging awareness of communicated meanings, then the integrating of these meanings in a new mentality and sensibility in the individual. Out of this process emerges a new structure of qualitative meaning in the world, and as this is shared, a wider community among men. The values of the individual feed the social process: The social process is the matrix in which the individual grows. The whole

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[27] Wieman, Henry Nelson, Source of Human Good (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), p. 68

cosmic process is an analogue to this experience and God is a participant in that process.

Wieman's thought stands as a corrective to those metaphysical systems in traditional Christian thought which have severed God from the world by a radical otherness, that have ascribed immutability and impassivity to God in such a way that there are two worlds--passing moments of discarded time and the eternal world--so disjointed that they can never be related. Wieman's vision holds the larger cosmic process and the depth of meaning in the creative present in one vision. He thinks of the heights and depths of possible human achievement, and indeed of the dynamic relation between the individual and God, as a constantly discernible meaningful and communicable process. A brief review of the central themes in Wieman's thought will indicate the breadth and coherence of his perspective.

The "creative event" is the central category; creativity, the central power at work. And though the total process of history may be the subject matter for a full understanding of the creative event, the place for its study is in the immediate present. The locus of concern is not some future culmination but rather the present possibility of achievable values; salvation is not "to eternal life," but to more significant, present meaning. The life of man, as indeed the life of God, is seen in the connective growth of value. God is defined on one occasion by Wieman, although "defined" is an inadequate word, as the growth of meaning and value.

Wieman believes that with the proper scientific method religion can reconstruct its myths into operative concepts which have decisive meaning for religious life and devotion. He attempted to set up an operative

concept of God that would make it possible for others to achieve the same experimental verification that he has himself made. Wieman consistently rejects traditional views of God which speak of Him as so transcendent that He cannot be known. He rejects as well those views which picture God as so transcendent in sovereignty that His participation in the on-going process is denied. He further denies any view of God which asserts that the victory of God in some final culmination of history is already assured. Wieman's emphasis on freedom will not allow any foreclosure of that process prematurely, for to do so would not only deny real freedom, but rob the process of significance. The struggle for the achievement of values is not "shadow boxing" nor is it the enactment of that which is predetermined. The creative good at work, says Wieman, is not absolute in the sense that the Good will be the necessary victor but in the sense that the Creative Good will always and forever be about its changeless purposes for good.

God is at work in the world. The central concept which describes His activity is "creative event" in Wieman's early writing, and "creativity" in his final work,[28] but in both cases with minor modifications, the terms can be understood as "God at work." While the structure, form or order of "creativity" is not yet perfectly known, it can be said of creativity that it is metaphysically ultimate as logically prior to knowledge and experience. It is religiously and axiologically ultimate, for as man submits to its transformation it brings forth the greatest human good.

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[28] _____, Man's Ultimate Commitment (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1958), pp. 75-91

Creativity is the only eternal order. It is changelessly present through all changes and throughout all time. It is the ground of the highest meaning in human life and rightfully makes the strongest claims on men. Creativity commands man's ultimate commitment because it "creates him," it "saves him" from destructive tendencies and self-destruction. It satisfies the most elemental need of man's nature when man meets the required conditions. Man must commit himself in religious faith to the transforming power which continually and creatively works in him and his world.

If "creativity" in all these varied uses and descriptions points to God at work in the totality and order of things, it becomes immediately apparent that this is a form of immanence. It is not, however, a form of immanence in which the creative power at work is dependent upon man or some tendency in man, some special striving for achievement or some quality in his nature to be realized. For Wieman, God, or creativity, is the Ground of the metaphysical order which makes creativity possible and the Source of all particular creatures, including men. The response of man to felt values and the structures of good is a response to the goodness at work in the heart of things. Immanence in this sense means in other words that God enters into the process in a determining way, not that He is identified with the process or determined by it.

There is a long tradition in Christian apologetics which speaks of God as transcendent over His creatures and over His creation in such a way as to emphasize His distance, His otherness, His majesty or His regnancy. Wieman's view attempts to keep a profound distinction between God and His world and between God and man, without making a radical

separation. Thus God is pictured neither as wholly transcendent Absolute, as an unmoved Mover, nor merely as one Power among other powers at work in a developing cosmos. He is always and everywhere the Source of being and good at the heart of the world's life, determining it as fully as it can be determined, given the conditions that He has to work with, and given a creation in which His creatures are creatively free.

Man's participation in the ongoing process is given a high status in Wieman's concept of human freedom. The supreme task for human life is to serve the creative event and thereby to achieve the greatest depths possible in the given moment. Man is a genuine creator, and the breakthrough of the individual may make possible the new level of achievement of the group. The mystic participates in the creation of new levels of spiritual achievement and brings radical transformations.[29] Although the mystic stands in history at a particular moment, his contribution may well work transformations that are significant links in a larger, longer and deeper transformation which is the cosmic process itself. This is the scope, the sweep and grandeur in Wieman's view of man's part in the whole. Each individual occasion for attainment is both a function of the whole vast cosmic process as well as a creative personal moment. Man's creativity is pregnant with future possible realities, so that man's life is seen to be not merely a watch in the night but an integral part of the ongoing and unperishing universe.

The grandeur of man, and particularly the emphasis on the religious mystic who is the creative genius, should not obscure the social nature

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[29] Ibid., pp. 87-89

of reality and the group achievement of values. The transformations that are wrought lift history to a higher level. Humanity is an integrated group and man by his individual attainment shares in the process of making all of the world that has been or will be. The community is more than human. The human and divine images meet in the process of creation, reaching ever higher into dynamic unity and levels of attainment. God is moving always as the Source and Ground for the new meanings and the new relevancies that will emerge. Man's destiny is to be a part of this achievement, here and now, and not to inherit another order of experience in a different quality of being in some disconnected "future." Man's hope lies along lines of creative effort. By his creative effort man moves to new levels of social unity, to key moments of self-discovery and attainment, and by so doing lives not only to the glory of God, but finds in creativity meaning for his personal life, his place in society, and his destiny in the total process.

We have called this "an eternal temporalism" for this view of creativity, says Wieman, could not occur apart from time. Here eternity, if it is used at all, is defined as the potentiality of all beauty, love and glory yet to be attained in time. It is not illusory; it is achievable. The Eternal here refers to the Ground of man's being and of his hope, the Source of all creativity which is at work bringing this longer and deeper transformation to be.[30] The Eternal is that reality which preserves its identity throughout the changes of time, even though it has no being apart from time. The Eternal commands the ultimate commitment

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[30] Wieman, Source of Human Good, p. 309

of man, not because it confers upon him an eternal dimension or a temporal permanence within the process, but because it makes him, in the moment of his creativity, a participant in the eternal creativity which is at work in the world.

The status of the individual self or the survival of my personal identity beyond death is something about which Wieman's rigid empiricism refuses to speak. He insists, and rightfully, that speculation about survival when stated as a symbol of hope must be handled with great care. But melancholy over the lack of personal survival must not obscure the status of the individual in the achievement of values in the continuously creative process of the emerging present. Hocking and Brightman have maintained that the failure of the universe to sustain man, the bearer of values in the survival of the individual beyond death, represents a failure of God. Wieman sees the individual's link with eternity and his victory with God in the creative participation in the emerging present. Whatever eternity is or means, the present is the order of experience in which it must be found, known or experienced.

Wieman's thought has significance for a number of reasons, and this significance reaches into the domain of Christian attempts to give speculative articulation to the content of the faith. His thought is most fruitful in its attempt to understand the problems raised by the new science as they bear on theology. He provides needed correctives to both the "old" and "new" orthodoxy when they emphasize the transcendence of God in such a way that He is removed completely from the processes of history or the crisis of man's freedom. His views of Christ suggest correctives

to those Christian formulations which conceive his relation to history in static concepts of being rather than in dynamic and creative terms. His most significant contribution, however, is his insistence that the meaning of life--whatever its destiny--lies in the creative and transforming use of freedom in the present moment and his correlation of the present moment to the total ongoing process of things. It is this insight which should prove a corrective to that tendency in Christian existentialism which derives from the thought of Kierkegaard. Although this body of existentialist thought understands the crucial meaning of freedom and commitment in the moment, it makes this "instant" an atom of eternity and fails adequately to relate it to the ongoing process of life in time.

Finally, Wieman's emphasis on the social nature of experience, knowledge and achievement of value is a valuable corrective to those forms of Christian individualism which maintain their individualism and subjectivity at the price of epistemological naiveté and social irresponsibility. At this point, Wieman's emphasis on the social nature of existence should be a challenge to orthodoxy to a deeper understanding of the corporate nature of the Church in the ongoing redemptive processes in history. It might be possible to rewrite Paul's phrase and say of Wieman that he has "resolved to know nothing but process, and that deified." However, it should be said with respect and with appreciation for the breadth of his vision and the account it takes of those enlargements of man's horizon that have been made possible by recent scientific investigations into man's nature, his world and the cosmic process of which he

is a part.

Having said this much by way of review and appreciation of Wieman's thought, issue must now be taken with him at several key points. Though Wieman stands within the Christian tradition, there is much in that tradition which we find of crucial importance that Wieman has denied or diluted to the point that it is almost unrecognizable. His "process theology" has been described as a religion of immanence. It is the position of the present writer that the historic Christian faith is best understood by a paradoxical relation of immanence and transcendence. God is both involved in His creation and transcendent over it. He is "Suffering Servant" and Sovereign Lord. We would affirm, without Wieman's hesitation, that God is "personal" and has revealed Himself in the person of Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ we have not the religious insights of a mystical genius lifting man to a new level of "awareness of qualitative meaning" but God's revelation of Himself as redeeming love. Our emphasis would not center on the present moment in the evolving process but on the revelation of a divine Providence that stands over each moment both in judgment and mercy. The implications of these affirmations for man's fulfillment and destiny are decisive.

If man is merely a struggling finite creature who participates in an evolving good, his lot may be viewed with the stoic courage of a tragic humanism. There is, admittedly, a kind of grandeur in such a position. If, however, man is the object of a divine love that is eternally redemptive, it is impossible to conceive of that love as something which today is and tomorrow is not. The point here is not that man, the passing,

temporal being, loves the eternal God, but that the eternal God loves His finite creatures: loves them and "calls them by name," so that their particularity is precious to Him. It is this basis alone that allows one to question, with John Donne, whether God would, or could, ever "let my soul fall out of His hand."[31] Wieman is not denying what we are here affirming. His attempt to reconstruct the myths of religion into operative concepts proceeded along lines of a rigorous empiricism which places these affirmations of faith beyond the reach of his thought. It is our belief that the radius of his thought sweeps too small a circle to contain the riches of the historic Christian proclamation and, we would say, the essential and decisive content of that faith must always stand beyond the reach of any empirical method rigorously adhered to. The present writer has the growing conviction that, while empiricism in its various forms may illumine areas of the Christian faith, the Christian faith provides a perspective from which can be seen the limitations of empiricism. The Christian faith, we believe, receives its most adequate expression through the use of myths and symbols of a religious-poetic character derived from God's self disclosure in revelatory events and their articulation in the biblical tradition. The concluding pages on the religious thought of Reinhold Niebuhr will examine the special relevance of religious-poetic myths and symbols in describing the drama of man's life and destiny.

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[31] Donne, John, The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Donne. The Modern Library. (New York: Random House, 1941) p. 419

Reinhold Niebuhr

For Reinhold Niebuhr, the central concern is neither Hocking's "meaning and value," Brightman's "person," nor Wieman's "process." Rather it is the drama of man's relationship to God in history, in which God is seen as the Creator, the transcendent and sovereign lord over His creation, and man is seen as the object of God's love who is in perennial rebellion against God's will. In Niebuhr's view, man's life and the temporal process is neither self-derived, self-explanatory nor self-fulfilling. It must always be understood against the backdrop of a super-history. The analysis of man's nature, history and destiny is to be pursued by use of religious-poetic myths and symbols provided by revelatory sources in the biblical tradition. One calls the roll of these by mentioning the Fall, the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Antichrist, the Last Judgment and the Resurrection.

Whether or not he is willing to acknowledge it, man is always related to the will of a personal God--a relationship which turns very easily to rebellion and pretension that man is himself God. Man is created in the image of God, which gives him his dignity and his freedom. However, man is a finite creature, which means that he cannot save himself either by thought or moral striving. The symbol for man's broken freedom is the Fall, which in Niebuhr's thought both universalizes and individualizes man's sin and revolt against God.

From the Fall, which is at once the symbol for the beginning and perennial misuse of man's freedom, to the eschaton, which is the final culmination of history, the story of the struggle between sin and redemption must be told in dramatic-poetic form. The drama will occasionally

do violence to reason and make any attempt to put the meaning of man's existence into ontological categories appear futile. The dominant motifs of the drama are "love," "sin," "self," "will," "freedom," "alienation," "salvation"--terms which never quite fit into a metaphysical framework, and attempts to state them systematically have often ended in their being stated in paradoxes.

The focus of the drama turns on the doctrine of the Atonement, which is, says Niebuhr, an absolutely essential presupposition for the understanding of human nature and destiny. The Cross, says Niebuhr, is the symbol of ultimate reality; it is at once the symbol of man's rebellion against the will of God and of God's victory over man's rebellious act.

If his anthropology is interpreted through the symbolic meaning he attaches to the Fall and his soteriology is seen in the meaning of the Cross, then the symbols of the end, of Antichrist and Last Judgment, are the dominant symbols for the meaning of history. The Antichrist is a symbol that warns against any system of progressive realization of good. Man's life, says Niebuhr, is perennially ambiguous; there is no inevitable progress in the realization of good. Every new development in man's powers brings with it a development in his capacity to misuse that power and therefore to enlarge the scope of his rebellion. The Antichrist stands as a symbol that no good, be it moral, political or religious, is finally or absolutely achieved in history. The Last Judgment is a symbol that the Christ who is the center of history is also the final norm of history. History does not redeem itself by inherent or inevitable processes of development; indeed, history cumulates rather than solves its most

crucial problems. The final judgment upon history will measure it against the norm which has already appeared in the suffering love of Christ on the cross.

The symbol of the resurrection of the body has many facets. It points to the social nature of human existence and to the psychophysical unity of man as a total being. This symbol indicates also that man's final fulfillment does not come by a dualism in which the mind or spirit achieves salvation by escape from the body, its prison. The resurrection of the body is a symbol for particularity of selfhood. Individuals are redeemed to everlasting life. The Resurrection gives a clue to the character of eternal life. It is fellowship with a loving and redeeming God rather than extinction to nothingness or mystical absorption into the undifferentiated unity of the divine nature.

The present writer is in full agreement with Niebuhr when he maintains that the Christian faith contains the hope for individual, personal survival in the resurrection to eternal life. Man's transcendence over time is an indication of his possible survival. The claims of faith are not made on the merits of man or as a justice he demands of the universe. Man's hope is in a forgiveness that will overcome his sin and a divine omnipotence that will complete his life without annulling its meaning.

Resurrection comes from God--God who alone has the power to bring resurrection. God is sovereign Lord over both life and death. The faith that God will grant the resurrection is grounded in the conviction that the God revealed in Jesus Christ is a redeeming God, and from His love nothing, neither life nor death, can separate us.

At the point where the drama of history is seen to be forever under the shadow of a super-history Niebuhr's position must be questioned. His emphasis on the three major symbols: the Fall at the beginning, the atoning act of Christ at the center, and the Last Judgment at the end, places history under the judgment of a super-history or a transcendent norm. Prophetic judgment is the central theme in his writing. If it is said in his defense that Niebuhr's thought arose as a protest against the naive optimism of the liberalism of the day, or the political utopianism of Marxism of the period, still his work is that of an apologist for the Christian faith and must be judged in the light of that tradition. We must ask whether there are emphases which receive little attention from him which warrant larger places in the Christian interpretation of history. More particularly we must ask whether history is to be interpreted primarily through the category of judgment or of redemption.

The symbol of the Kingdom of God stands, for Niebuhr, as an order which always transcends the present world. By its norms the present world is found wanting, is always sinful, always under judgment. This judgmental cast to his thought fails, we believe, to give full account of the cumulative forces and processes for good. Although he acknowledges that there is provisional achievement of mutuality in love, of progress in wider harmonies in human life, in greater scope to justice within communities and nations, he repeatedly expresses the fear that these orders of achievement will be themselves deified, will be corrupted by man's pretensions that they are "final" rather than relative goods. Thus Niebuhr

hesitates to acknowledge real achievements in history. So conceived, the emphasis on the Kingdom of God focuses on the end of history or has its orientation "beyond" history. What is lacking here should be stated without denying the validity and power of Niebuhr's prophetic criticism of man's pretension. But just as the perfect will of God stands over all history in judgment, so the redemptive power and grace of God is at work in history from the beginning. This is not a case made in the interest of a more "optimistic" view of man or a justification for the cheap romanticizing of positive thinking or ethical striving. It is a matter of theological and metaphysical import. The action of God in history which directs, enlarges, and redeems is as valid a mark of the Christian proclamation as is the reminder that in the light of the perfect norm of love man has "done those things that he ought not to have done." If this is true, it has, for the present writer, implications for the meaning of the Cross and for the symbol of the Last Judgment.

The Cross stands in the center of history not only as the norm of suffering love in which history is judged, but also as the actual event in which that love was let loose as a continuing power in the world. A new history was made possible by that divine act and achieved in part by man's response to it. So, too, with the Last Judgment. While in Niebuhr's thought the Last Judgment stands most often as a symbol for the condemnation of man's pretensions, the biblical view of divine judgment contains not merely condemnation but approval and even praise. It is to be remembered that though all are judged, some are resurrected to eternal life and some to damnation. One recalls the words of Jesus' description of

the Last Judgment in which he says, "Come, ye blessed of my Father; inherit the Kingdom which was prepared for you from before the beginning of the world." (Matthew 25:34) Though Niebuhr has pointed out that the kingdom "has come" and "will come," he fails to work out in sufficient detail the implications of the first part of this affirmation about the achievement of good in life or the expression of the grace of God within history. Though it is not consistently true of Niebuhr's thought, redemption is often seen, not as an actual transformation of life and growth in grace, but as forgiveness of sin and the promise of a trans-historical reconciliation and culmination beyond history. One must acknowledge at this point that nowhere does Niebuhr sever in a radical way the meanings and values achieved in this life from the final culmination beyond history. However, there is so great a gulf between the images of time and eternity that the good achieved in history often pales beside the fulfillment that is proposed beyond it. Even if one admits that there is biblical warrant for this point of view, that "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard; neither has entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him," (I Cor. 2:9) still the very quality of grace which prompts such a hope must be seen working in the present, and those who participate in that hope have not only a future orientation to life, but are "new beings" already.

What is at stake here is, as we have said, a matter of emphasis rather than principle. Niebuhr has been so aware of the judgment necessary upon the evils and pretensions of men in history, and his stance has been so consistently that of the prophets of judgment to which he is often

likened, that he has appeared sometimes to forget the divine forbearance and love that takes into its account "the fall of the sparrow" and "numbers the hairs on the head." While it is true that one prophet announces the destruction of Jerusalem, it is the patient work of another that oversees the rebuilding, the rejoining of the walls of that city, and both images--the Judgment and the Reconstruction--are valid symbols within the framework of a faith in an ever-creating and redeeming God.

We believe that the stakes are high at this point. The judgment of history from "beyond history" must continually take place. Yet skepticism about history can never be absolute. Faith must find its service in history and its partial fulfillment there without placing the locus of its hope in an idolatry about the outcome of its particular work. Faith will see its provisional accomplishments within the framework of the creative and redeeming work of God. What is emphasized here is that the creative order is good, the realm of human freedom is real, there is growth and real becoming in the process of history, even though that process may never be regarded as inevitable progress. There is coherence between the processes of history and the redemptive activity of a God whose eternity is <u>not</u> other than time.

It is true that Niebuhr has said all of this. Yet he has more often seen the process of history through the eyes of a continual judgment and divine wrath rather than through the symbols of divine grace and regeneration. Where Niebuhr sees man's freedom primarily in his acts of rebellion, that freedom must also be seen in the creative participation of individuals and social groups in emerging structures which transform life

and achieve the good. When this is affirmed there follows significant consequences for the doctrine of fulfillment and destiny. The linkage between the gracious action of God in man's life in time and the hope for a completion and fulfillment of man's life beyond history in a resurrection to eternal life is given greater meaning and strength. The key to this correlation may well be the deepening awareness and exploration of God's redemptive action both here and there. When the emphasis is placed on redemptive love rather than divine judgment, the avenues are opened for the grace of God to enlarge and nourish the faith that is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

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